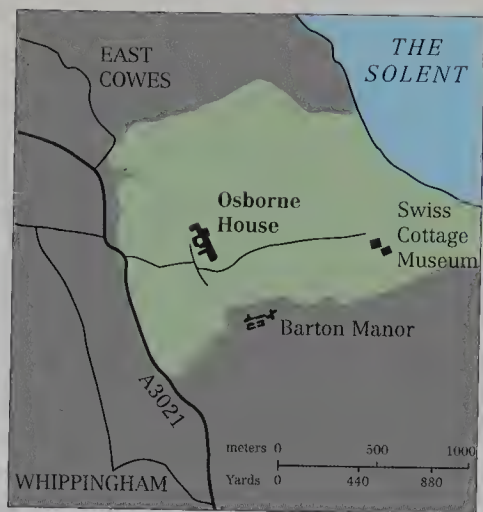


OSBORNE HOUSE



ENGLISH HERITAGE

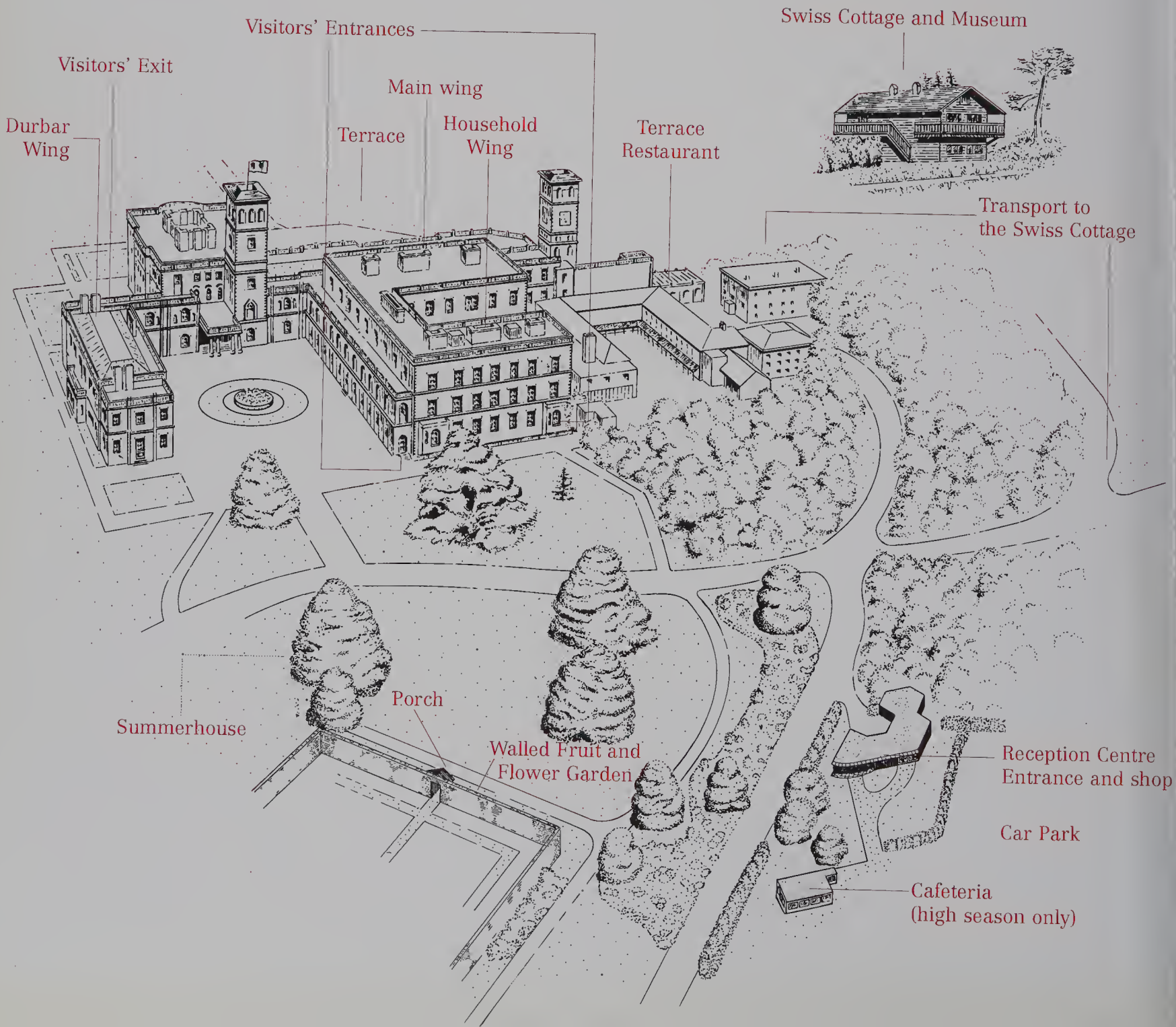


Shortly after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the Osborne Estate was given to the nation by King Edward VII. Two of the wings became a convalescent home for officers. The majority of the contents of the house remained on loan from the Royal Collection, and part of the ground floor was opened to the public.

In 1954 Her Majesty the Queen allowed access for the first time to the Royal Apartments on the first floor, which had remained private for fifty years after Queen Victoria's death. In 1989 the Royal Nursery Suite on the second floor was also opened.

This fully illustrated guidebook provides a detailed tour of the apartments – a treasured record of their former royal occupancy. The tour continues on the Terrace, where splendid views of the house and grounds may be enjoyed, and ends at the Swiss Cottage and Museum.

Pavilion:
Royal Apartments



Osborne House

Michael Turner PhD

Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings



LEFT Osborne House and the Landing House from the sea. This watercolour by the thirteen-year-old Prince Alfred was given to Queen Victoria on her birthday in 1858

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Special Note

Most of the paintings and works of art in the rooms are from the Royal Collection and are subject to rearrangement or substitution from time to time. The amount of daylight in the rooms is restricted by the use of blinds to protect the historic contents.

Acknowledgments

Paintings and photographs from the Royal Collection and extracts from Queen Victoria's Journals are reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Registrar and staff of the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle. Kate Russell generously gave access to the Ponsonby MSS at Shulbrede Priory and Edward Sibbick gave freely of his extensive knowledge of Osborne. Rowena Shepherd kindly provided a description of some of the gifts in the Durbar Room.

Published by English Heritage

ISBN 1 85074 922 1

Edited by Ken Osborne and Louise Wilson, designed by Martin Atcherley of Design Guide and typeset in Linotype Centennial

Copyright © English Heritage 1989. First published by English Heritage 1989, 4th edition 1994, reprinted 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999. Fifth edition 2000. Sixth edition 2001. Seventh edition 2002. Eighth edition 2003. Ninth edition 2004, reprinted 2005.

Printed in England by St Ives Westerham Press Ltd C300 07/05 08776

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Key Dates in Osborne's History

- 1845: Purchase of Old Osborne House
- June 1845: Foundation stone of Pavilion laid
- Sept 1846: Pavilion occupied
- 1848: Demolition of Old Osborne House; Household wing completed
- 1851: Main wing completed
- 1855: Swiss Cottage given to royal children
- 1859-60: New stable block built
- Dec 1861: Death of the Prince Consort
- 1862: Swiss Cottage museum opened
- 1880: Chapel (Victoria Hall) built
- 1890-91: Durbar wing built
- Jan 1901: Death of Queen Victoria
- 1902: Osborne House given to the Nation
- 1903: Royal Naval College Osborne established
- 1904: Edward VII Convalescent Home opened; Part of Osborne House opened to public
- 1921: Closure of Royal Naval College
- 1954: Private apartments opened to the public
- 1989: Nursery Suite opened to public
- 1993: Commencement of Osborne Estate Repair and Restoration Project
- 2000: Table Deckers' Rooms and Walled Garden opened to the public
Closure of Edward VII Convalescent Home
- 2001: Durbar Room restoration and exhibition
- 2004: Opening of the Lower Terrace to the public

TOUR

The recommended tour starts with the Royal Apartments inside the house, and then continues outside, finishing at the Swiss Cottage Museum. On days when the house is crowded, visitors might find it more convenient to start at the Museum (page 28).

For the Royal Apartments, turn right outside the Reception Centre where you purchased your ticket and follow the signs past the rhododendron beds, part of Prince Albert's informal planting in the pleasure grounds.

For an external view of the house, pause near the large circular flower basket in the carriage ring, an open courtyard. Behind it are the flagtower and three-storey **Pavilion** where Queen Victoria and her family lived. The walls are built of brick, with a Roman cement rendering coloured to imitate Bath stone. The lighter coloured Portland stone entrance (a port-cochère) accommodated carriages, allowing the Royal family to alight under cover. The window frames are mahogany and were painted during the Queen's lifetime to protect the wood.

The carriage ring is lit by iron lamps supported by dolphins – a reminder that Osborne was a seaside home.

To the left of the carriage ring is the **Durbar Wing**, built in 1890-91 to provide a large ground-floor reception room known as the Durbar Room (page 19), and accommodation on the first floor for guests and for Princess Beatrice (youngest daughter of Queen Victoria) and her family.

To the right of the courtyard is the **Grand Corridor** which links the Main Wing and the Household Wing, but only the latter is visible from this side. At first-floor level, the corridor has an Italianate open loggia or arcade with round-headed arches. A glazed passage between the Pavilion and Main Wing was first added in 1877.

The Household Wing has its own separate entrance for members of the Royal Household. This entrance is flanked by two copies of antique statues, both originally of cement. The Dog of Alcibiades on the right is original. The Calydonian Boar on the left was added in 1991 to replace the original destroyed in 1918. This wing contained the dining room, various offices and, on the the upper floors, accommodation for upper members of the Household. From 1904–2000 it housed the Edward VII Convalescent Home.

Enter via the Household Entrance. The double door on the right of the narrow entrance hall leads to the former Household Dining Room; it now houses an introductory exhibition to Osborne House.

Leave the exhibition and follow the signs to the Grand Corridor.

Grand Corridor

The highly decorated walls and ceiling of the corridor reflect Prince Albert's liking for the Italian Renaissance, acquired during his Italian tour of 1838. The design was devised by the Prince in conjunction with Ludwig Gruner (1801–82) from Dresden, who was appointed 'adviser in art' to the Queen from 1845. Gruner advised on the interior decoration of Osborne, and the layout of the terraces, as well as acting as his agent in Europe for some of the most important paintings purchased by the Prince.

High on the walls are reduced plaster copies of reliefs from classical friezes including the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon, Athens (now in the British Museum). They serve to emphasise the fact that the corridor was conceived after the manner of a classical sculpture gallery, a theme popular in late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century country houses. The principal difference at Osborne is that almost all the sculptures were by living British and European artists, many works being specifically commissioned by the royal couple.

The ebonised cabinets are part of the 1850s decorative scheme. On top of them is an extensive collection of bronzes which are mostly reduced copies of antique figures and famous popular works.

Halfway down the corridor is a statue of Queen Victoria in classical costume by John Gibson (1790–1866) set in a gilded niche. It was given to Prince Albert as a birthday present by the Queen in 1849. Exposed sections of the corridor floor in front of the statue reveal the elaborate Minton tile floor. The design includes the arms of Great Britain and maritime symbols.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

ABOVE 'Salve' (greetings!) on the floor of the Grand Corridor welcomed visitors to Osborne. Matthew Digby Wyatt advised on the design. At the time he was the superintending architect for the Crystal Palace, erected for Prince Albert's Great Exhibition of 1851 (see page 40)

BELOW 'Venus and Cupid, or Innocence in Danger' by Edward Muller, intended as a birthday present from Queen Victoria to Prince Albert in 1862 (the Prince died 8 months before his birthday)



THE ROYAL COLLECTION © 2001



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Marble 'Victory' by C D Rauch and bronze copy of an antique statue of an Amazon typify the statuary in the Grand Corridor, where classical subjects predominate



ENGLISH HERITAGE

ABOVE LEFT Council Room candle-holder of ormolu (gilt brass) with porcelain figures



THE ROYAL ARCHIVES © 2001

ABOVE Council Room arranged for a Privy Council meeting about 1857. The plain ceiling and doors were elaborately redecorated in 1859



Continue along the corridor and turn right into the Main Wing which housed principal guests and the Queen's children when they left the nursery (page 10). The Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother, also had a suite of rooms at the far end of the Main Wing.

Council Room

The Council Room is on the left. This is the central room of the Main Wing which allowed access both from the principal guest rooms to the right, and from the public entrance and Pavilion to the left, via the Grand Corridor. The Queen's Privy Council of Ministers met here several times each year, and it was at such a Council meeting in June 1857 that the Queen gave Prince Albert the title Prince Consort. At other times the room was used mainly for entertainment including dancing, charades and drama enacted by the Household in the later years of the nineteenth century.

Gruner and Prince Albert again settled the elaborate decoration which was completed in 1859. In the centre of the ceiling is the badge of the Garter and other royal emblems. French windows lead on to the upper terrace, with the bronze Venus fountain by Barbedienne of Paris. The door through which visitors enter the room is flanked by portraits on Sèvres porcelain of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert which were presented to the Queen by Louis Philippe, King of France in 1846. *The Deer Drive* on the end wall is a copy of the original by Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-73).

Nineteenth-century photographs of the room show the chenille Axminster carpet dated 1851 which was displayed in the Great Exhibition of that year and bought by Queen Victoria, who had it adapted to fit the Council Room. The carpet remained at Osborne until the 1920s, when it was transferred to the British Embassy in Washington and subsequently deposited at the Smithsonian Institute. The Institute kindly presented the carpet to English Heritage in 1988. It has undergone conservation but is too fragile for



BELOW *Grand Corridor. Designed in the manner of a classical sculpture gallery, the detailed ceiling and tile floor contrast with the pale walls, which show the marble sculpture to best advantage*



ENGLISH HERITAGE

permanent display so has been replaced by the summer matting that normally covered it anyway.

Over the doors on either side of the chimney-piece are pediments containing medallions of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria, supported by Roman gods and goddesses which were added by William Theed (1804-91), Queen Victoria's favourite sculptor, in 1855. The left-hand door leads into the Audience Room.

Audience Room

Queen Victoria frequently received ministers in this room before Privy Council meetings. The original furniture was supplied by Holland and Sons in 1851 and much of it survives, including the writing table and the gilt satinwood chairs upholstered with crimson damask. The remarkable coloured glass and ormolu (gilt brass) chandelier represents convolvulus and arum lilies climbing out of a basket.

Turn right into the Main Wing corridor and re-enter the Grand Corridor which forms a link between the Council and Audience rooms and Queen Victoria's apartments.

Grand Corridor CONTINUED

The Queen took exercise in this corridor on the rare occasions when the weather prevented her from going outside. The white and gold candelabra with two burner lamps and benches with Morocco leather seats form part of the original furniture in the corridor.

On the right is the Marine Venus standing within a shell niche. The classical statue was found in the Baths of Caracalla, Rome, and was subsequently admired at Stowe by Prince Albert, for whom it was purchased by Gruner on behalf of Queen Victoria at the famous Stowe sale of 1848.

The imposing grey marble statue on the left is of Antinous, the Emperor Hadrian's favourite page who was drowned in the Nile about AD 122. The statue was thought to be Egypto-Roman when it was sold at Northwood Park Cowes, in 1850, but is now believed to be a nineteenth-century copy of a statue in the Vatican. The white marble statue of the Winged Victory by Christian Rauch (1777-1857), a copy of the statue at the Valhalla at the Regensburg, was purchased at the Great Exhibition for Prince Albert by the Queen. The end door gives a further view across the terrace.

Turn left along the corridor. Near the end is a projecting bay window and the opposite wall contains an inset panel by John Gibson of Cupid and Psyche who swore eternal love to each other. It was given to the Prince by the Queen for Christmas 1845. Opposite is a life size statue of Noble, Queen Victoria's collie dog by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm (1834-90). It was carved for the Queen in 1884 and represents the sentimental taste of the older Queen in contrast to the more scholarly influence of Prince Albert during the years of her marriage.

Beyond the barrier can be seen the principal entrance hall to the Pavilion. The walls are painted to imitate marble. The mahogany side table, cupboard and chairs are typical of early Victorian hall furniture.

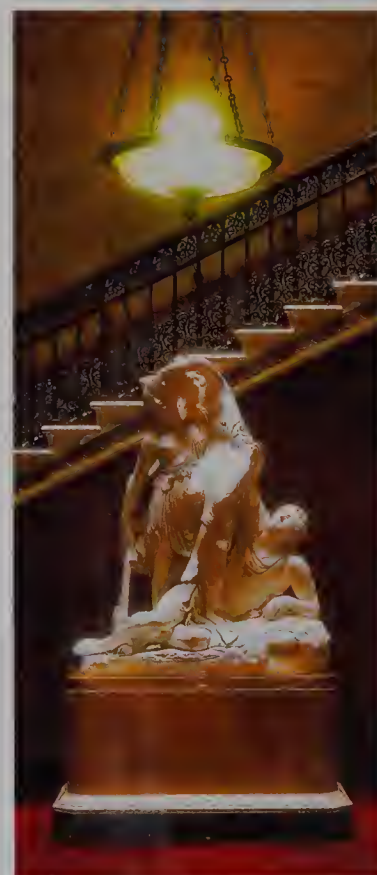
Turn right through the side door and proceed down the stairs to the Table Deckers' Rooms.



THE ROYAL COLLECTION © 2001

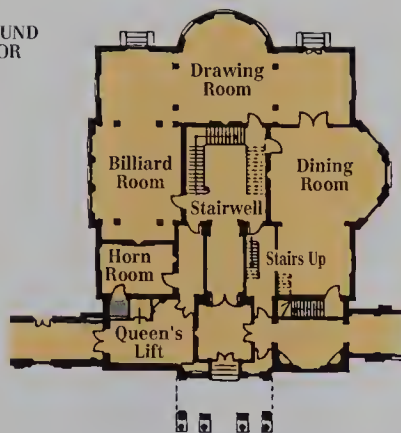
ABOVE *Mahogany hall chair in the stairwell designed by Henry Whitaker, 1847, incorporating the monogram of Victoria and Albert*

BELOW *Marble sculpture by Joseph Engel of Amazons and an Argonaut in the stairwell was commissioned by Prince Albert in 1851*



ENGLISH HERITAGE

GROUND
FLOOR



ENGLISH HERITAGE/MARCUS ROBINSON

Table Deckers' Rooms

The Table Deckers were responsible for setting the dining tables for lunch and dinner, arranging displays using flowers from the kitchen garden, and making the final preparations to the food which came from the kitchen about 100 metres away. Their basement rooms contain a hot closet for keeping food warm, extensive storage for porcelain in cupboards, and lead-lined sinks in the inner room for washing glassware after the meal. Much of the Victorian painted decoration has survived in these rooms, including the blue painted walls to the glazed cupboards (blue was considered to discourage flies).

Climb the stairs to the Dining Room.

Dining Room

The Dining Room, Drawing Room and Billiard Room are the three principal reception rooms in the Pavilion. They are all richly decorated and each contains an elaborate ceiling painted in 1857 after designs by Gruner. The Table Deckers' stairs led into the Dining Room, so that food and plates could be brought directly here and laid out on the large mahogany sideboard, conveniently situated near the doorway. This, and the four side tables, have lion monopodia legs and were designed by Henry Whitaker in about 1847. A wine cooler stands beneath the sideboard.

In the 1850s, dinner was served promptly at 8pm. It had shifted to 8.45pm towards the end of the century, but it was frequently 9.15pm before the Queen arrived and the company could sit down to eat. Osborne contains no separate breakfast room; so the Dining Room sometimes performed this additional function when it was too cold to breakfast outside.

One of the dining tables is displayed to show the laying for dinner in progress, with the set square and ruler used by the table decker to ensure each setting was arranged perfectly. Family portraits have always hung in the Dining Room. The largest, above the sideboard, is a copy of the family group by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805–73) which was hung in this position on Queen Victoria's birthday in 1849. To its left is a



THE ROYAL COLLECTION © 2001

ABOVE Clock by Deniere of Paris, 1846, in the Dining Room. The central bronze figure of the prophet Jeremiah is copied from Michelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Rome

RIGHT The Table Deckers' Room,
looking towards the Servery
BELOW The Servery



ENGLISH HERITAGE/MARCUS ROBINSON



ABOVE Dining Room about 1863, before many of the later nineteenth-century portraits were hung there



RIGHT AND ABOVE The Dining Room table set for a meal and reproduction of a menu card from the 1890s

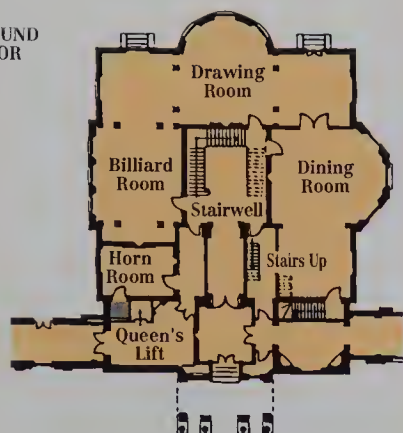
copy of Winterhalter's portrait of the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother.

The marriage of Princess Alice to Prince Louis of Hesse took place here in July 1862. It was overshadowed by the continued mourning for the Prince Consort who had died the previous December, and was described by the Queen as 'more like a funeral'. It was also in this room that the Queen's body lay in state before being taken to Windsor in 1901.

Enter the Drawing Room through the large doorway at the far end.



GROUND
FLOOR



OPPOSITE The room was restored in 2003 to reflect its appearance in the 1890s, with repainted walls, replica soft furnishings including the elaborate Aubusson carpet, and electrified chandeliers

LEFT The Erard piano in the Drawing Room is cased in tulip wood and decorated with porcelain plaques painted by Carl Schmidt, who also painted the plaques on the six cabinets in this room

Drawing Room

Full-length mirrors in the heavy shutters reflected the brilliant light of the three cut-glass chandeliers which originally hung here. Queen Victoria described the Drawing Room in 1846 as 'extremely handsome, with its yellow damask satin curtains and furniture to match'.

It was furnished more sparsely and quite formally, up until the 1870s. That it appeared formal even to some Victorian eyes is evident from the remark of Mary Buteel Lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria in 1858, which is quoted by

M. Ponsonby in *Mary Ponsonby* (1927): 'I have routed the piano- forte out from the wall, to sit with one's face towards the people, instead of one's back; put the sofa crooked, with the round table near it, instead of stiffly in the middle of the room; the armchair crookedly and comfortably near the fire. If P.A. [Prince Albert] says anything about the pianoforte I shall stop his mouth with a little bit of scientific theory about the properties stone walls have of absorbing sound'.

Visiting foreign royalty were received in this room, and the Queen often retired here after dinner to play cards, or sing and play at the Erard piano with members of the Household. Both the piano and the six cabinets surmounting the bookcases are decorated with porcelain plaques showing miniature copies of Italian Old Master paintings. Celebrated musicians also gave

recitals here, including the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind (1820-87) who appeared at Osborne in 1847, three months after her London début.

The pair of cut glass pedestal chandeliers near the bay window were made by Oslers of Birmingham. They were commissioned in 1847 by Prince Albert who supervised and altered the design, and they were displayed at the 1851 Great Exhibition. This room contains some idealised statues of Queen Victoria's children which were carved by Mary Thornycroft in the 1840s and 1850s.



ABOVE Drawing Room in the 1870s. The room was initially lit by candles in the three cut-glass chandeliers made for Prince Albert by Oslers of Birmingham. The columns project into the room and the carpet was made to fit

BELOW Princess Beatrice aged one year, portrayed in a nautilus shell by Mary Thornycroft, 1858

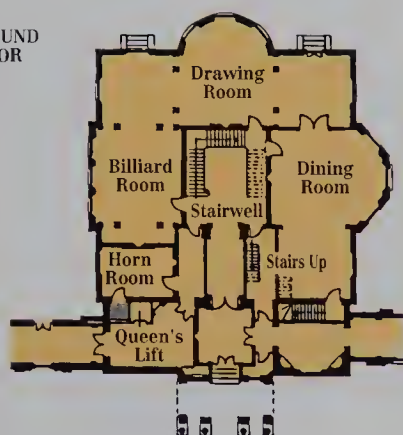


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GROUND FLOOR



LEFT Billiard Room. On the chimney-piece is a life-size marble bust of Queen Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, by William Theed, 1861. In 1899 the billiard table lamp was converted to electricity along with the other principal rooms in the Pavilion

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Billiard Room

The slate billiard table was manufactured by Magnus. The legs were painted to represent marble, and the frieze panels by Thurston were designed by Prince Albert. The elaborate light fitting was also conceived by the Prince.

The gentlemen of the Household could play billiards after dinner and sit on the raised bench while the Queen remained in the adjoining Drawing Room. Technically, the gentlemen were still within the Queen's presence and required to stand unless given permission to sit, but curtains drawn across the columned screen of imitation marble kept them out of sight. The Queen also learnt to play billiards while at Osborne, and her journal records games with the ladies of the Household after luncheon.

Above the bench is *Cardinal Wolsey at the Gate of Leicester Abbey*. This historical painting was commissioned for the room by the Prince from Charles West Cope (1811-90).

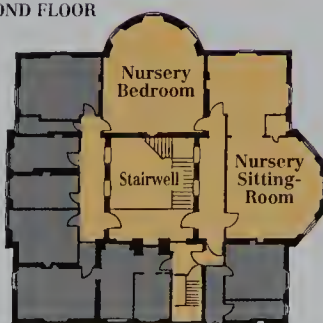
Cross the principal stairwell, the walls of which were painted in 1861 to imitate yellow Siena marble. William Theed's posthumous bust of the Prince Consort sits on a marble base which houses a ventilator, part of Cubitt's heating system, that was controlled by a coal-fired boiler in the basement.

Climb the steep back stairs which have a simple handrail and iron balusters and gave access for servants to all floors.

Proceed to the second floor Nursery Suite unless you prefer to visit the first floor only and then return to the remaining ground-floor rooms.

BELOW This nineteenth-century German musical box in the Nursery Sitting Room was operated by turning the handle. The figures moved in time to music from the opera *Tannhäuser* by Richard Wagner (1813-83)

SECOND FLOOR



Stairs Up

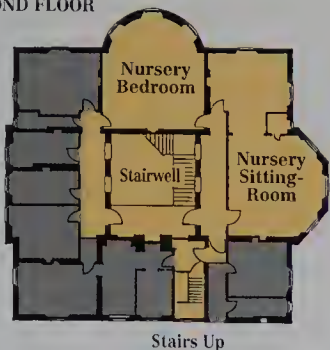
Royal Nursery Suite

The Royal Nursery Suite was carefully sited on the second floor to give the Queen and Prince Consort easy access to their children from their private apartments on the first floor. The children normally remained in the nursery until aged six, when they graduated to the schoolroom on the first floor (not open to the public).

Three rooms have been opened in the Nursery Suite.



SECOND FLOOR



The first and second were formerly the sitting-room and bedroom of Lady Lyttelton, the Superintendent of the Royal Children. Folding doors originally divided the two rooms. The wallpaper has not survived and so both rooms have been painted to match the aqua-green builders' finish found elsewhere in the house.

The first room in the 1880s became the schoolroom for the children of Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg. It has now been restored as the **Nursery Sitting Room**, and contains an exhibition of photographs, entitled 'Grandmama of Europe', that shows how the present royal families of Europe, both reigning and exiled, are descended from Queen Victoria. The Queen and Prince Albert had nine children and made ambitious plans for their marriages. They looked to the European royal families for suitable partners, as they wanted to create a network of diplomatic and royal connections that they hoped would help to secure peace and stability in Europe. It is through these marriages that the present reigning monarchs of Britain, Spain, Norway, Denmark and Sweden trace their ancestry to Queen Victoria. The exiled royal families of Germany, Greece,

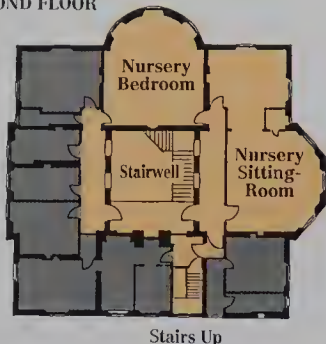


Pen drawing by Prince Albert of Vicky, the Princess Royal, and Bertie, the Prince of Wales, playing at Windsor, 1843

BELOW Nursery Sitting Room (in 1990). The painting above the chimney-piece is 'The Children in the Wood' by John Thomas Peele, 1851



SECOND FLOOR



BELOW Modern reproduction of the mid-nineteenth century German dolls' house shown in the 1870s photograph



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Romania, Russia and Yugoslavia are also directly descended from the Queen.

At the far end of the Nursery Sitting Room, two windows give fine views of the terrace and across the parkland towards the sea.

The third room is the **Nursery Bedroom**, which has been restored to match its appearance in a photograph taken in the 1870s, when it was used on visits by the Queen's grandchildren. None of the original decoration survived and the wall-paper, carpet and curtains are all modern reproductions. The fine swing cradle with its mahogany frame was made for Vicky, the Princess Royal, in 1840. The cots, two of which are reproductions, have hinged cane-work sides and upholstered pads to protect the children. The screen shielded the children from draughts, and the bed was slept in by a nurse. Several high-chairs were used, similar to the one on display which has an adjustable foot-rail.

Many of the paintings, most of which originally hung here, had special associations for the Queen and her family. Above the cots hangs a portrait of the Prince Consort. owl above the washstand was painted by Prince Albert aged seventeen. Below it hangs a copy of a sketch by Queen Victoria of Eos, the Prince's favourite greyhound.

In the 1890s a member of the Household commented 'all round the room are literally stacks of toys', but virtually all that remain today are Princess Louise's wicker trug and Princess Helena's exercise clubs. The dolls' house is a modern reproduction of the original shown in the photograph.

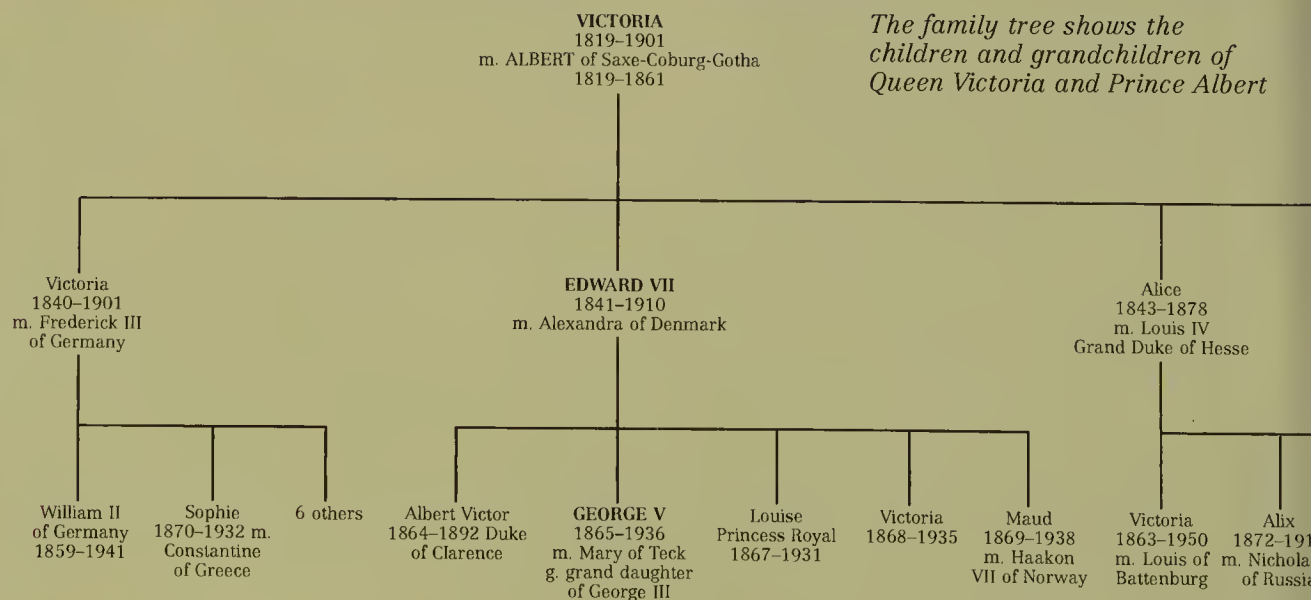


NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD

ABOVE Nursery Bedroom. Much of the evidence for the present-day reconstruction (OPPOSITE, TOP) came from the (ABOVE) photograph of about 1873 taken by Jabez Hughes, a commercial photographer from Ryde in the Isle of Wight



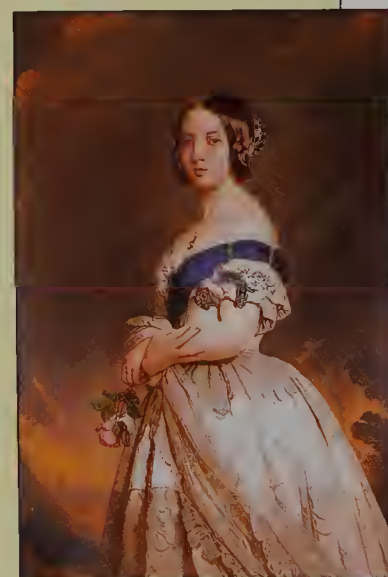
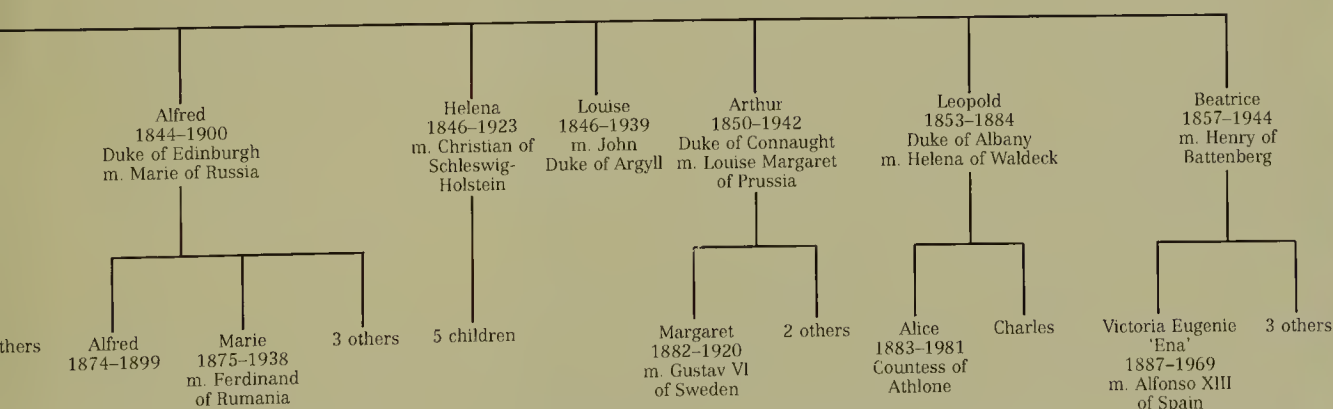
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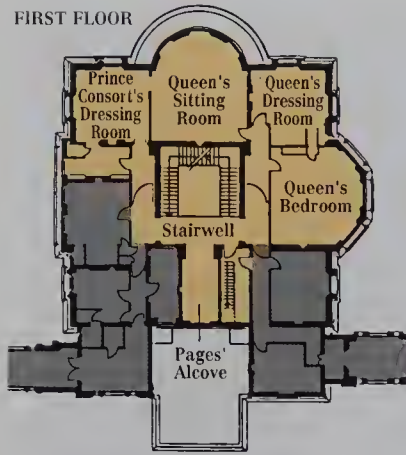


ENGLISH HERITAGE

Prince Albert (LEFT) and Queen Victoria (RIGHT) on Sèvres porcelain in the Council Room. Both are copies of F X Winterhalter's portraits of 1842 and were painted by Antoine Béranger and Marie-Adélaïde Ducluzeau respectively



THE ROYAL COLLECTION © 2009



Stairwell

The round-headed arches of the corridors form open arcades overlooking the stairwell. The strong summer light is diffused through the large skylight on to the walls whose elaborate arabesque decoration (foliage and figures fancifully entwined) is a further reminder of Prince Albert's appreciation of the Italian Renaissance. At the head of the stairs is a life size statue of the Prince Consort in classical armour commissioned by the Prince from the German sculptor Emil Wolff (1802–79) as a birthday present to the Queen in 1842, but the statue was not completed until 1844. According to the Queen, its 'bare legs and feet looked too undressed to place in a room' and in 1849 a copy was made for Buckingham Palace, its feet suitably shod. Profiles in marble of Frederick, the Crown Prince and Victoria, Princess of Prussia are inserted into the overdoors to left and right. The left-hand door originally led to the Nursery Kitchen, while that to the right is a plaster dummy inserted for the sake of symmetry.

Also at the head of the stairs is the large fresco *Neptune resigning the Empire of the Seas to Britannia* by William Dyce (1806–64).

Fresco painting (done directly on to wet plaster) was a traditional technique popular in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy. Prince Albert encouraged the re-adoption of fresco painting which was already undergoing a revival in his native Germany. The Prince, as chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, had commissioned Dyce to paint frescoes in the new Palace of Westminster and in 1847 Dyce came to Osborne to paint his allegorical composition

LEFT Neptune Resigning the Empire of the Seas to Britannia by William Dyce, 1847. The fresco depicts Neptune standing in a shell chariot drawn by three seahorses. Neptune is handing his crown via Mercury (messenger to the gods) to Britannia, who already holds Neptune's trident. Beside her is the lion of England, while the figures behind her represent industry, trade and navigation

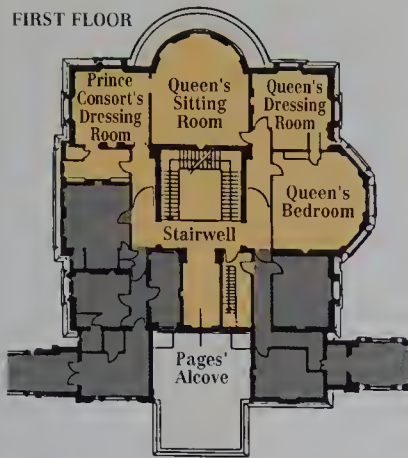


which was designed to demonstrate Britain's supremacy as a world power.

Descend the principal staircase, which has a mahogany handrail and decorated cast-iron balustrade, to the first floor.

The Pages' Alcove on the first-floor landing contains modern copies of the bells which summoned them. Some of the Prince Consort's Renaissance pictures were hung here in the nineteenth century including three by the German artist Cranach (1472–1553).

Retrace your steps across the landing and enter the side corridor. Turn right through the iron gate. This, and the gate in the opposite corridor, were installed after Victoria's death by Edward VII and as a general rule they were only opened to members of the Royal Family. This arrangement lasted until 1954 when Queen Elizabeth II gave permission for the private suite of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort to be opened to the public. Their suite commands superb views of Osborne Bay and the Solent beyond and consists of a sitting room, bedroom and two dressing rooms, with baths and showers installed by Cubitt in 1847. The carpets and curtains are modern copies of the original patterns which were retained in the private apartments throughout the nineteenth century.



Prince Consort's Bathroom

The large fresco by A von Gegenbauer, 1830, is an interesting choice of subject by the Prince Consort. It depicts Hercules laying aside his power and becoming a slave to Omphale, Queen of Lydia. On the walls are some paintings by the Prince Consort and photographs of tableaux acted by the royal children (see page 36).

Prince Consort's Dressing and Writing Room

The dual function of this room is indicated by its contents: a dwarf wardrobe, washstand and writing table. The Prince used this room as his own private study. The walls were hung in the nineteenth century with early Renaissance pictures. These were almost exclusively religious and included works by Mantegna, Bellini and Fra Angelico, some of which are now in the National Gallery, London. Above the chimney-glass is a double portrait of Albert and his brother Ernest by Louise von Meyern-Hohenburg, 1841. It was bought by Queen Victoria two years after her marriage. In the corner is the Prince's French harmonium.

The Prince's Bath and Dressing rooms were kept by the widowed Queen as far as possible as they were in his lifetime, just as Albert and his brother Ernest had kept some of the rooms of their father after his death in 1844.



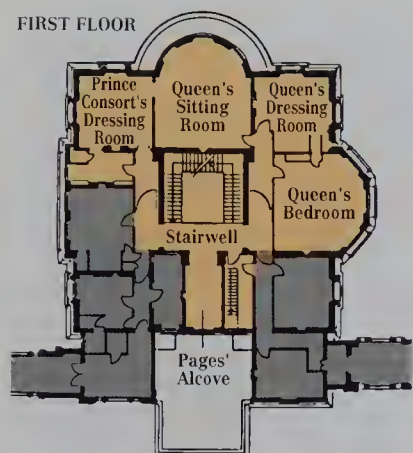
ABOVE Prince Consort's bath and shower, neither of which were standard fixtures in houses of the 1840s. Above the shower is a plaster copy of an antique colossal head of Jupiter



ABOVE Prince Albert's Minton china Bride's inkstand designed by John Bell for the Felix Summerley Art Manufactures. The figure of Love holds a torch of Hymen (god of marriage) and an inkwell in the shape of a vase

RIGHT Prince Consort's Dressing and Writing Room. The basket contains beech logs which Queen Victoria preferred to burn in the private apartments





Queen's Sitting Room

This room is in the centre of the first floor of the Pavilion. Here, the Queen worked on her dispatch-boxes, sitting at the left-hand desk. The writing table on the right is identical except that the drawers are shallower to allow for the Prince Consort's higher chair. The Prince worked here while submitting memoranda for the Queen's inspection in his capacity as her private and personal secretary.

'When I am not particularly occupied', wrote the Queen in 1846, 'Vicky and Bertie alternately always take their supper in our room. Then little Helena is brought down for a quarter of an hour, followed by Affie, and then Alice'. The room was also informally used after dinner where the Queen and Prince could retire either alone, or with close friends. Queen Victoria's journal includes references to watching the moonlight shining on the Solent from the balcony, and listening to nightingales in the trees below.

Behind the sofa is *The Good Samaritan* by Sir Charles Eastlake (1793–1865), who was Keeper of the National Gallery (1843–47) and encouraged Prince Albert's innovative artistic tastes. After the death of the Prince Consort, Queen Victoria accumulated the memorabilia which fill the room and include many portraits, photographs and busts of her family.

Continue into the Queen's Dressing Room.

BELOW Queen Victoria's Sitting Room. The three bell-pulls on the right of Queen Victoria's desk would have summoned Miss Skerrett (the Queen's dresser), a page, and Rudolf Löhlein, who was a Coburger and personal attendant to the Prince Consort and later to the Queen. The electricity was produced by chemical action within a simple primary cell



Queen's Dressing Room

A bath is concealed by a pair of doors with full length mirrors and next to it is a shower. Two circular portraits by Queen Victoria of the children of a Balmoral gillie (Highland servant) hang nearby.

Enter the narrow passage containing a water closet, which emerges into the Queen's bedroom via a wardrobe door.

Queen's Bedroom

The bed hangings, sofa and curtains are made from the Victoria and Albert chintz (printed cotton), the design of which contains profiles of the Queen and Prince Albert. Originally designed for the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert* in the 1850s, its use in this room is modern.

BELOW Queen Victoria's Bedroom, as it is today



ABOVE Minton porcelain dressing table set in the Queen's Dressing Room, commissioned by Prince Albert as a Christmas present for Queen Victoria in 1853



BELOW Queen Victoria's bath and shower in her Dressing Room could be hidden by doors and full length mirrors when not in use





Hanging above the chimney-piece, the *Entombment* by Gustav Jäger (1808–71) was commissioned by the Prince Consort in 1845. The painting illustrates the Prince's *avant-garde* taste, as the German School did not become popular until the 1850s.

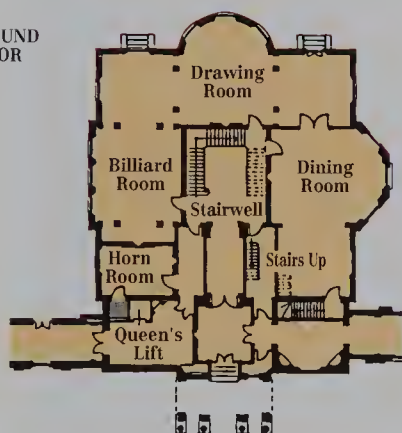
A pocket for the Prince Consort's watch is fixed to the headboard, next to a posthumous portrait of him which the widowed Queen displayed in each residence. In January 1901 Queen Victoria died here on a small couch bed, surrounded by her

LEFT 1850s hand-coloured photograph of Queen Victoria's Bedroom. Some Osborne photographs were coloured by the Queen, and others by professional artists

children. A plaque was fixed above her bed and the blinds pulled down in the room which became a family shrine for the following fifty years.

Descend the main staircase to the ground floor. Cross the stairwell to the Horn Room corridor.

GROUND FLOOR



BELOW Queen Victoria's lift, manufactured by Holland and Sons



Horn Room

The Horn Room door on the right has been half-glazed and is kept closed to protect the nineteenth-century carpet and wall-paper. The room was sometimes used as a visitors' sitting room and was also the setting for some of Queen Victoria's birthday tables (page 36). The remarkable collection of antler furniture was bought by Prince Albert in 1846 – even the circular table is inlaid with sections of deer horn. This furniture is attributed to Rampendahl of Hamburg. Similar furniture was displayed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 which accounts for its increased popularity in Britain after this date.

In 1989 Landseer's moving portrait of Queen Victoria was returned to this room where it was first hung in 1866. The picture is titled *Sorrow* (see page 37) and depicts the widowed Queen in the Broad Walk at Osborne seated on her pony Flora. John Brown, her Highland servant, is clad in the mourning tartan devised for him by the Queen. Before going through the double doors, note the two pictures on the left of old Osborne House, one of which was drawn with Alum Bay sand in 1844.

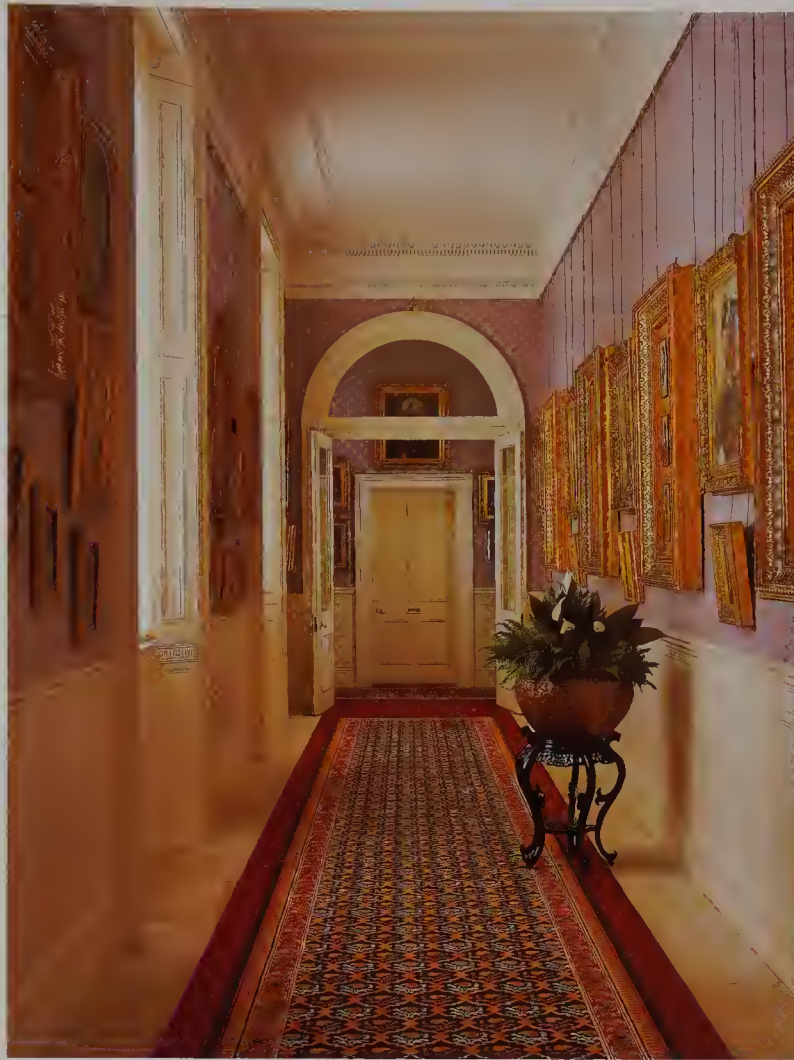
Queen Victoria's Lift

This passenger lift was hand-operated by an attendant in the basement. It was added in 1893 to give the ageing Queen easier access to her first-floor suite. This area was formerly a guest bedroom before it was converted into part of the corridor linking the newly built Durbar Wing of 1890–91. The dado (lower section of wall) is covered with Lincrusta, an embossed wall-covering popular at this time.

The next pair of doors pierce the original external wall of the Pavilion and lead into the Durbar corridor, which is also lined with Lincrusta at dado level.



ABOVE Horn chair and stool which form part of the suite of German antler furniture in the Horn Room. Paintings of some of Queen Victoria's favourite dogs and horses hang on the walls



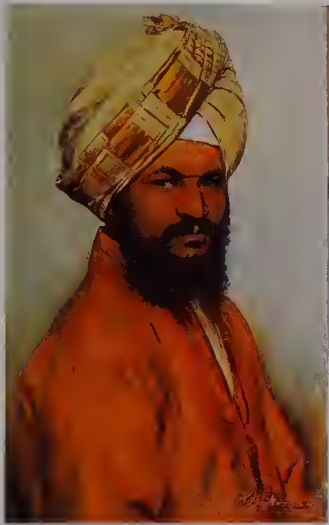
ABOVE Abdul Karim, Queen Victoria's Indian secretary by Rudolf Swoboda, 1888

Durbar Corridor

Queen Victoria became Empress of India in 1876. Most of the objects in this corridor relate to that country, including portraits and busts of Maharaja Duleep Singh (1838-93).

The fifteen-year-old Duleep Singh was entertained by the Queen and Prince Albert at Osborne in 1854. At the left-hand turn of the corridor is the imposing portrait of the Maharaja, which was commissioned by Queen Victoria from Winterhalter in the same year. Nearby on the left-hand wall are three small paintings on porcelain of the Maharaja, his wife Maharanee Bamba and their son Victor Albert, named in honour of the royal couple. This section of corridor also contains an extensive collection of portraits of Indian dignitaries, soldiers, craftsmen and some of the servants who attended Queen Victoria in the 1880s and 1890s. The portraits were commissioned from the Austrian court artist Rudolf Swoboda (1859-1914).

The Queen's most famous Indian servant was Abdul Karim who came to Osborne in 1887. Karim rose to become the Queen's personal Indian Secretary. He taught her Urdu and was known as the *Munshi* (teacher). Two portraits of him by Swoboda are on the left-hand wall near the end of the corridor. The corridor has been redecorated to match the original colour scheme.



ABOVE Bhai Ram Singh, by Rudolf Swoboda, 1892. Ram Singh was the principal craftsman of the Durbar Room, whose work included carving the wooden moulds from which Jackson & Co cast the ornate fibrous plasterwork



BELOW Portrait of Duleep Singh by FX Winterhalter



ABOVE Durbar Room decorated for Christmas, 1896

teenth century. The style was used in the 1880s by Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, for the billiard room at Bagshot Park, the interior of which was carved by Bhai Ram Singh under the supervision of Lockwood Kipling (father of author Rudyard Kipling), who was director of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, India. In 1890 Kipling was asked to submit an Indian design for Osborne and the following year he arrived with

RIGHT Ram Singh at work in the Durbar Room, 1891



Durbar Room

The Durbar Room was constructed in 1890-91 to provide a state banqueting hall, which had been lacking at Osborne. Hitherto, major receptions were held in marquees on the lawn. The name Durbar is derived from the Indian word meaning both a state reception and the hall in which such gatherings were held. The name is appropriate in terms of both the function of the room and its Indian style of architecture, which was popular for a brief period towards the end of the nine-



ABOVE One of the original set of 36 dining chairs designed for the Durbar Room by Kipling and Bhai Ram Singh; purchased with the assistance of the National Art Collections Fund



ABOVE Early-nineteenth century Indian chair veneered with etched and painted ivory, designed for the European market

Ram Singh to discuss a scheme with Queen Victoria and Princess Louise – herself an accomplished sculptress. Temporary Indian cotton hangings covered the bare walls until the decoration was completed in 1893.

The deeply coffered (panelled) ceiling is composed of fibrous plaster by G Jackson & Sons of London, taken from moulds produced under the supervision of Ram Singh. The walls are enriched with plaster and carton pierre – a type of papier mâché common in the late nineteenth century. Every surface is richly embellished from the ceiling to the white walls which are enlivened by teak framing. The decoration includes the Indian symbols of Ganesha – the elephant god of good fortune – over the door near the gallery, and a peacock over the chimney-piece. Jacksons had 26 craftsmen working on the chimney-piece and overmantel. Over 500 hours were spent on producing the peacock alone, which was equivalent to one man working solidly for ten weeks.

The original Durbar dining-room furniture was disposed of in 1916.

BELOW View beneath the minstrels' gallery. The design of the brass door handle by Bhai Ram Singh is similar to the one used at Bagshot Park, Surrey



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ABOVE Hand-coloured marble bust of Princess Gorumma by Baron Carlo Marochetti, given as a birthday present to Prince Albert by the Queen in 1856



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ABOVE Reproduction of the 1890s Indian carpet originally made in Agra

Visitors' Exit



The exhibition of gifts

Most of the objects on display in the Durbar Room were presented to Queen Victoria to mark her jubilees of 1887 and 1897, and they reveal the same intricacy of surface detail found on a larger scale in the room. In 1916 the objects were re-arranged and an additional cabinet installed, by Sir Guy Laking, Keeper of the King's Armoury and Curator of the London Museum. To mark the centenary of Queen Victoria's death in January 1901, the collection has again been redisplayed in a series of new cases. In addition, the original Indian carpet and curtains have been copied, as has the arrangement of the lighting (with replica light bulbs) in order to recreate the appearance of the room in about 1900.

The address caskets form the majority of the collection. These are decorative boxes which originally contained loyal greetings to the Queen from India for her Golden and Diamond Jubilees in 1887 and 1897. The caskets were sent from every part of the Victorian Indian Empire, and as a result provide a rare snapshot of the state of Indian craftsmanship at the end of the nineteenth century. Most of the addresses themselves were rolled up in pouches made from fine silks and velvets, decorated with goldwork embroidery.

Many of the caskets are made from silver, of varying quality and in a range of shapes. One of the most beautiful is a replica of the great gun of Bijapur, a famous cannon cast in Agra in 1549. There are also many decorated with sandalwood and ivory carving. Some are very rare such as those decorated with sadeli work, where tiny pieces of ivory, metal and coloured woods are inlaid in geometrical patterns. This craft was associated with everyday Indian souvenirs at the time, and still is today, but the quality of the work found in the Queen's caskets is of course much higher.

Queen Victoria was also given gifts which were unique, such as the exquisite model of a palace in Jaipur, made from plaster and painted and gilded. Even the interiors, which can hardly be seen, are recreated in colourful detail. The message conveyed by these gifts, given by every rank and section of Indian society, shows a general desire among Queen Victoria's subjects in India to pay homage to their Empress.

The lobby at the far end of the Durbar Room was originally a private entrance hall serving Princess Beatrice's first floor apartments. The right-hand door beneath the minstrels' gallery leads to the former Durbar Servery, which has a new visitors' exit and ramp on to the Terrace.



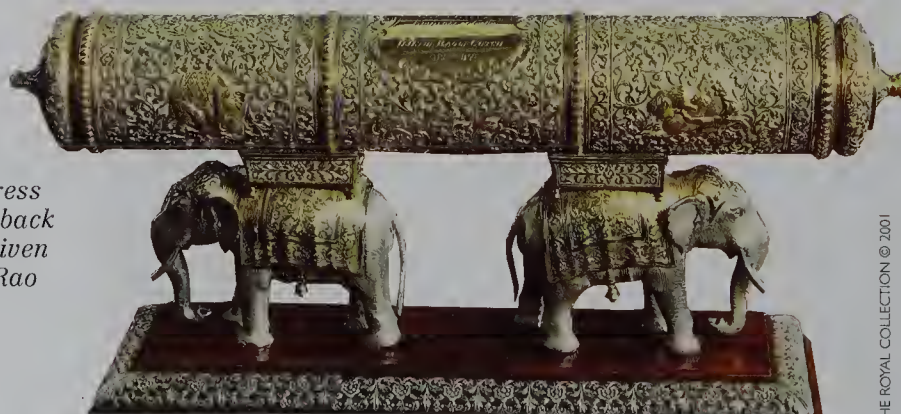
ABOVE Ivory workbox with a central panel of carved and pierced ivory, showing a mythological scene. It was presented to Queen Victoria by the Raja of Bobbili in 1893 as a specimen of the crafts in his country



ABOVE An address case decorated with delicately coloured lacquerwork decoration, showing birds and flowers. This was given to Queen Victoria by the inhabitants of Hyderabad, Sind, for her Golden Jubilee in 1887



ABOVE A velvet cover decorated with gold embroidery known as zardozi, for the lacquer address case above



RIGHT Silver cylinder address casket, supported on the back of two silver elephants, given to Queen Victoria by the Rao of Kutch, 1897



ABOVE A silver model of a Hindu temple, made by Herappa Boochana, a goldsmith of Poona. It was presented to Queen Victoria for her Diamond Jubilee, by the Hindu community of Bombay

Terrace

The upper and lower terraces were constructed under the supervision of Prince Albert and Gruner. A considerable quantity of earth was moved to achieve the present levels and the valley – centred on the Main Wing – was also remodelled to create the sweeping fall to the coast.

Much of the garden statuary is a mixture of factory-made cement and bronze-coated zinc casts after antique models which were illustrated in mid-nineteenth-century trade catalogues. The cement statues were supplied by Austin & Seeley, artificial stone manufacturers of London, while the cement balustrades and their vases were moulded and cast by Cubitt's workmen. Prince Albert purchased the zinc statues from both Geiss of Berlin and Miroy Frères of Paris. The bronze coating tended to fail, exposing the underlying zinc, but on the Terrace in front of the Pavilion are four statues by Miroy representing the seasons which have been restored to their original appearance.

The **Upper Terrace** is a good position from which to view the garden front of the house. The **Pavilion** is on the right. Queen Victoria's first-floor Sitting Room leads on to the semi-circular verandah. The three-storey block on the left is the **Main Wing**, the round-headed ground-floor windows of which include the Council Room, with the steps outside, and the Audience Room. Some of the royal children slept in rooms on the floors above. Other rooms were reserved for guests and



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ABOVE Watercolour by Queen Victoria of the Pavilion from the valley footpath, made in c1848 under the instruction of W L Leitch



LEFT View from the upper terrace, overlooking the Andromeda fountain. Cement copies of the Townley vase sit on the balustrade at the foot of the steps in front of the Alcove. On the extreme left is the servants' dormitory of 1850, a detached block which accommodated 40 staff (not open to the public). The terraces were paved in 1853 with Orsi and Armand's metallic lava, a mid-nineteenth century composition comprising tar, chalk and gravel which was cleaned and polished and laid in different colours: green outside the Pavilion, blue in front of the Main Wing and red and yellow on the Lower Terrace



TOP Watercolour of the upper terrace in front of the Pavilion by W L Leitch, 1850. The bronze statue of a boy with a goose is a copy of a Roman original in the Louvre, Paris. It was cast for the Prince Consort by J Francis, 1846. The large sphinx vase was designed by Gruner in 1849. He combined a number of cement castings including the four sphinxes with added wings; a similar eight-foot diameter bowl appears in an Austin & Seeley catalogue of 1844

ABOVE Pergola on the lower terrace, 1855. Watercolour by W L Leitch who frequently visited Osborne to give Queen Victoria drawing lessons. The intricate design of the parterres (ornamental flower beds) was lost when the terraces were grassed over this century, but has been recreated by combining the results of archaeological excavations and documentary research



government ministers. The two-storey Spur Wing further left contained a ground-floor guest suite for the Duchess of Kent until her death in 1861. The rooms above with the Venetian windows (a central round-headed window and two flat-headed side-lights) were occupied by the Prince and Princess of Wales after their wedding in 1863.

Beyond is the Clock Tower, which is 27.4m tall (90ft). It was designed to look like an Italian campanile (bell-tower) and echoes the flag tower of the Pavilion – 32.6m tall (107ft). The clock was made for Kew Palace in 1777 and was adapted to four faces by incorporating a mechanism from Brighton Pavilion prior to its installation at Osborne in 1850. The mechanism still retains its luggage label from the South Western Railway addressed to Mr Cubitt, Osborne.

Further left is a square alcove with two arched open sides used by Queen Victoria for breakfast, and for reading and writing. Her journal often describes the scent of jasmine, orange blossoms and roses from the wooden pergola nearby.

The **Lower Terrace** contains a triple-arched alcove in front of which is the Andromeda fountain by John Bell. It is surrounded by eight 'marine monsters' by William Theed, cast in 1858-60. The lowest flight of steps beyond the fountain is flanked by cement copies of the Medici lions in the *Loggia de' Lanzi* Florence, supplied in 1851. The lions face the lowest fountain of a bronze boy with a swan by Geiss of Berlin. The bronze-coated zinc statues on the terraces represent classical heroes and deities, including the hunter Meleager with his spear and hound at his side, which stands near the Andromeda fountain.

Cross the Upper Terrace in front of the Main Wing. Descend the **Horseshoe Steps** to the **Orangery**, and the **Victoria Hall**, which was completed in 1884 as a private chapel for Queen Victoria. Both now form the **Terrace Restaurant**. **John Brown's Walk**, the yew-lined path beyond the Orangery and Victoria Hall, contains a granite memorial seat to Queen Victoria's favourite Highland servant. It joins the drive to **Swiss Cottage** (page 26). A sloping path to the rear of the restaurant lobby leads to visitor WCs. These are situated in the former **Kitchen Court**, which Cubitt converted from the 1770s stables of the original Osborne House.

To avoid the **Horseshoe Steps**, retrace your route, past the Durbar exit and along the outside of the Durbar Wing. Follow the signs to the **Summerhouse and Porch**. The small octagonal summerhouse was built by Cubitt in 1848 and the children occasionally had their supper here. The red-brick wall behind it is part of the late-eighteenth-century kitchen garden. The wall was heightened by Cubitt in 1848. He disguised the brick buttresses to look like stone pilasters and in the centre he placed the entrance porch to the original Osborne House.

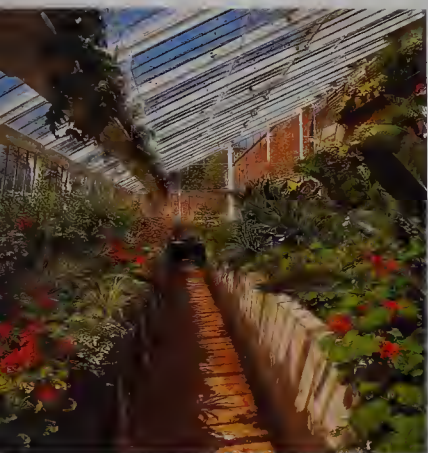
The Walled Fruit and Flower Garden

Inside the walled garden, the original path layout and dipping well have been restored. In 1843, the garden was described as 'fully cropped and stocked with choice standard and other trees', but towards the end of Queen Victoria's reign, the emphasis was on growing flowers for use in the house. A new garden added in 2000, to the design of Rupert Goldby, incorporates trained Victorian fruit trees such as *Lane's Prince Albert* apples, *Victoria* plums and *Brunswick* figs, while further period fruit and roses overhang the new iron arches framing the paths. A cold frame in the north-east corner is full in winter and spring with Queen Victoria's favourite Parma violets.

The two Gothic lean-to glasshouses, erected in 1854 by Thomas Clark & Co of Birmingham, copy the formerly extensive glasshouses erected in the 1840s by the Prince Consort at Frogmore, Windsor. The entrance porch of the original house overlooks the three-storey **Household Wing**. At the right-hand end is a small attached building, the only entrance to which is via an outside door with a semicircular fanlight above. This is the Smoking Room constructed for the Prince of Wales and gentlemen of the Household in 1866 because Queen Victoria would not permit smoking inside the house (the room is not open to the public).

Follow the signs to the Swiss Cottage and Museum, a walk of half a mile. Alternatively, visitors may ride from the carriage ring in a horse-drawn carriage to join a minibus near the top of John Brown's Walk. The walk follows the contours of the valley and provides an excellent view of Osborne House and its terraces as well as passing close to the ice house. The formal landscape around the house is in marked contrast to the parkland through which the visitor now passes. The Swiss Cottage grounds are a further contrast.

BELOW The new arches in the walled garden support the historic varieties of trained fruit and roses



ABOVE Interior of one of the greenhouses

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Swiss Cottage Garden

This area was given to the children in 1850 as a place where they could grow vegetables and sell them at commercial rates to the Prince Consort as a practical exercise in market gardening. A thatched summerhouse opposite the Swiss Cottage contains the children's scaled-down garden implements and barrows, each painted with its owner's initials. It was re-thatched with long straw in 2003, in imitation of the nineteenth-century pattern.

ABOVE Swiss Cottage in 1855 by W L Leitch. The rocks imitate an Alpine building where they prevent the wind from lifting the broad overhanging eaves of the roof. They were removed in 1932

Swiss Cottage

BELOW Thatched summerhouse in the Swiss Cottage Garden, containing gardening implements used by the royal children and a swing which used to hang from one of the nearby trees



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The timber Swiss Cottage sits on a rubble plinth. The royal children laid the foundation stone in 1853, and Prince Alfred (aged 8) enthusiastically assisted the labourers. The furnished cottage was formally given to the children on Queen Victoria's birthday, 1854. The first-floor balcony and other details imitate a traditional Swiss-style farmhouse. The external logs were initially coated with burnt umber which is deep brown in colour. They were covered with black tar in the twentieth century and have now been repainted brown.

The cottage is generally assumed to be a remarkable example of a prefabricated building manufactured abroad, transported and erected at Osborne. The building is, in fact, constructed to Imperial measurements with basic overall dimensions of 25ft by 50ft (7.63m by 15.25m); the principal external logs measure nine inches square (225mm square). Restoration work in 1990 demonstrated that the original wood used is *Pinus Strobus*, a long-leaved pine found in North America; one of the European pines would have been more usual in a native Swiss or German building. Horizontal iron tie-rods and other original metal fixings in the cottage are contrary to vernacular building techniques, which suggest that the builders of the Swiss Cottage were not confident with the principles of traditional timber buildings.

Although the design is based on Swiss or Tyrolean examples, it is likely that the Osborne estate carpenters

built the cottage themselves, possibly with help from a continental carpenter, or under the guidance of Prince Albert. Both Britain and Germany enjoyed a vogue for imitation Swiss chalets in the early nineteenth century which were well-illustrated in contemporary pattern books. But the principal inspiration for Osborne's Swiss Cottage was a similar but smaller cottage constructed in 1851 by Queen Victoria's half-sister, Princess Feodore, for her children at Baden-Baden.

The Prince Consort intended the swiss Cottage to be an educational experiment where the royal children could learn the rudiments of housekeeping and cookery. Prince Albert, when a boy, created a natural history museum in Coburg with his brother Earnest. He set aside a room at the Swiss Cottage where his own children could establish a similar collection. Objects came from all over the world, and the collection grew to such an extent that in 1862 a separate museum was built nearby (see page 28).

Louisa Warne, housekeeper at the cottage, lived with her husband on the ground floor. Among her duties was to look after a chihuahua presented in 1856 which Queen Victoria described as 'a curious tiny little dog brought from Mexico – something like a diminutive Italian greyhound'.

The first room on the ground floor is the **Pantry**. It contains a simple fireplace with a cast iron grate and small boiler, and a built-in sink under the window. A broad dresser holds the dinner service used in the cottage during Queen Victoria's lifetime. In the adjoining **Kitchen** is a small-scale mid-nineteenth century range made in Belgium and warming plates with which the children could cook and prepare supper. The walls are lined with blue and white tiles.

The first floor is reached via external stairs and a balcony, above which are carved quotations from the Psalms and Proverbs in German. These were doubtless intended by Prince Albert as precepts to guide his children through life: Psalm 121, verse 8, seeking God's guidance in all things; the need for patience: 'You will carry your load more easily if you add patience to the burden'; and perseverance, a variation of 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again', by W E Hickson (1803-70), a pioneer of national education in England.

The children frequently took tea in the **Dining Room** and Queen Victoria regularly visited the Cottage, using the writing desk on the left hand wall on which are displayed quills, headed writing paper, a blotting book and silver seal stamped 'Swiss Cottage'. On the rear wall is an ornately carved *secretaire*, or writing desk, reputedly of Swiss manufacture, as is the model of a Swiss clock-maker on the mantelpiece. Most of the furniture on this floor is English, including the remarkable set of furniture of American birch with bobbin turned legs. It was made for the Swiss Cottage by the local Newport firm of Francis Pittis in 1854, and includes the dining table, chairs and fire screen. Five extra leaves for the table are stored in the stand on the right of the chimney-breast. An adjacent octagonal work table has a silver label stating that it was designed by the King of the Sandwich Islands



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ABOVE *Swiss Cottage Kitchen, showing some of the utensils used by the royal children*

BELOW *Details of the secretaire in the Dining Room, Swiss Cottage. It is embellished with wood carvings of rural life in Switzerland which include the domestic scene shown here of a farmer's wife filling a pail*



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BELOW *Dining Room, Swiss Cottage. Under a glass dome on the dining table is a carved basket of flowers presented to Queen Victoria by Iroquois Indians from North America*



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LEFT The Sitting Room, Swiss Cottage. To the right of the chimney-breast is a wall-mounted cabinet containing sixty Swiss carvings, mostly in olive wood, which were purchased by the Prince Consort in Lucerne. A late nineteenth-century addition is the cheval screen in front of the fireplace which has an ebonised frame and artificial flowers

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and given to Queen Victoria by his widow Queen Emma.

The **Lobby** has two cloak stands, also supplied by Pittis, as were the wardrobe, wash stand, mirror and cane-seated couch in the **Dressing Room** on the left. The door on the rear wall led to an original WC.

The **Sitting Room** was the initial location of the children's museum, and, above the mantelpiece, is one of the mahogany display cabinets supplied by Pitti. Close study of the 1850s model shop 'Spratt, Grocer to Her Majesty', is rewarding. It has a counter and scales with weights, and overlaid shelves which are a reminder of the variety of groceries available in the nineteenth century. There is something to suit all tastes. The drinks include coffee, cocoa, several different teas (Gunpowder, Young Hyson and Rough Congou) and a selection of British wines: orange, ginger, mulberry, cowslip, port and sherry. 'Currie' powder other spices and dried and crystallised fruits of all descriptions are on display as are ingredients less familiar today including isinglass—gelatine originally made from the air-bladders of freshwater fish.

BELOW Model shopfront of Spratt the grocer, Swiss Cottage. This was one of the objects shown to the poet Tennyson and his children when they visited Osborne in 1863



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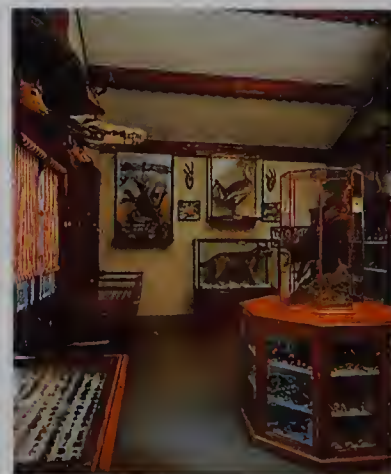
Swiss Cottage Museum

A Museum next to the Swiss Cottage was constructed in 1862 to house the children's growing collections. The Museum collection is broad in its subject matter and the cases were rearranged and numbered by Laking in 1916 (see page 21 for his work in the Durbar room).

Geological specimens (cases 21-30, 34-39), shells (42)—many of which were collected on Osborne beach—and stuffed animals and birds (31-33, 40-41) are assembled along with mementoes from foreign tours including antiquities (3-8) and rare items from the North American Micmac Indians collected by the Prince of Wales during his tour of 1860 (9).

An interesting episode in Osborne's history is illustrated

BELOW Natural history specimens in the Swiss Cottage Museum include a muffer (an Indian crocodile) shot by Prince Arthur which hangs on the end wall. Many of the objects are extremely fragile, and the light levels are kept low to protect them



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in case 12. It contains the clothes of two Bulgarian children, Johens and Georgy, who, fleeing from the Turks in 1854, were rescued by the British Navy. Queen Victoria took pity on the orphaned children who were subsequently brought up in one of the estate cottages.

Victoria Fort and Albert Barracks

As a boy, Prince Albert used to play in mock forts at Coburg with his brother. It was probably Prince Albert's suggestion that led to the building of a miniature earth fort with redoubts (detached earthworks) near the museum. It was completed in 1856, within two months of the signing of the Treaty of Paris which marked the end of Britain's successful campaign against Russia in the Crimean War. The princes helped construct the fort as a birthday surprise for Queen Victoria under the direction of Prince Alfred's governor, Lieutenant Cowell of the Royal Engineers. In 1860 the ten-year-old Prince Arthur assisted in adding the brick built Albert Barracks inside the fort. A drawbridge was added in 1861. The prince enjoyed playing in the fort. In later years he became Field Marshal the Duke of Connaught.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

ABOVE Victoria Fort and Albert Barracks. The small bricks used in the fort were made on the estate, and the Clerk of Works always kept a supply in stock for repairs

Alberta Deckhouse

The deckhouse comes from the Royal Steam Yacht *Alberta* which replaced the *Fairy* as a tender to the Royal Yacht *Victoria & Albert*. The *Alberta* was constructed by the Admiralty at Pembroke Dockyard, and launched in 1864. The paddle steamer had a complement of 25 men, was 160ft in length, had a beam of 22ft, and weighed 391 tons; she was capable of reaching a speed of 14 knots. Edward VII also used the *Alberta*, but when she was eventually broken up the deckhouse spent many years as a garden shed in Portsmouth until it was rescued by the Navy and given to Osborne in the 1970s.

Bathing Machine

The Queen's bathing machine ran on stone rails and was lowered into the sea. It contains a changing room and a plumbed-in WC which was fed by the water tank to the right of the entrance. Queen Victoria recorded her first experience of sea bathing in 1847 in her journal: 'Drove down to the beach with my maids and went into the bathing machine, where I undressed and bathed in the sea (for the first time in my life), a very nice bathing woman attending me. I thought it delightful till I put my head under the water, when I thought I should be stifled'.

The children learned to swim in a 'swimming bath' apparently devised by the Prince Consort, which comprised two pontoons between which was suspended a wood and zinc grating. Prince Albert was impressed by the curative effects of sea-bathing and frequently took the older princes for a daily swim while some of the princesses were taught by Eugene Loby, a young woman who came over to Osborne from Boulogne. After Queen Victoria's death, the bathing machine was used as a chicken shed. It was moved in 1927, but only restored and put on display in the 1950s.

BELOW Queen Victoria's bathing machine and Alberta deckhouse



ENGLISH HERITAGE

HISTORY

Osborne House



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ABOVE Old Osborne House by C R Stanley, 1844. The general plan of the house influenced Prince Albert and Cubitt when designing the Pavilion

OPPOSITE Aerial view showing the relationship of the formal Italian garden and terraces to the house. Parts of the landscape have now become over-mature, but the current Osborne Estate Repair and Restoration Project is conserving original planting and replacing missing or decayed specimens in order to return the grounds to their appearance at the end of Queen Victoria's reign (© Skyscan Balloon Photography)

When Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg in 1840, she had three large houses to live in: Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace and the Royal Pavilion at Brighton. These palaces, though well enough adapted for Court ceremonial, soon proved, to the parents of a growing family, to be unsuitable even for the small amount of private life allowed to royalty. Windsor had rooms for the young children and their nurses, but had no private gardens; Buckingham Palace had private gardens, but the nurseries had to be housed in the attics; Brighton Pavilion had neither nurseries nor gardens and had become enveloped by the developing town. The Queen and her Consort felt the need for a family residence in the country. They wanted, to use the Queen's own words, 'a place of one's own, quiet and retired'.

The Queen knew and liked the Isle of Wight. She had visited it twice as a girl with her widowed mother, the Duchess of Kent: in 1831, when she laid the foundation stone of East Cowes Church, and again in 1833. Her enquiries, sympathetically promoted by Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, led her to Osborne. Its situation, though relatively convenient to London, was yet secluded. Nearby was the sea, with a private beach for bathing and boating. After a trial visit the Queen wrote: 'It is impossible to imagine a prettier spot – we have a charming beach quite to ourselves – we can walk anywhere without being followed or mobbed.' The Queen and Prince Albert were determined to purchase and in 1845 bought Osborne House with an estate of some 342 acres (138ha) from Lady Isabella Blachford. They also

bought the adjacent Barton Manor, to house equerries, grooms and serve as the home farm.

The Queen was enchanted by her new property and wrote enthusiastically in her diary in 1844: 'I am delighted with the house, all over which we went, and which is so complete and snug. The rooms are small but very nice. With some few alterations and additions for the children it might be made an excellent house.' The Queen and Prince Consort together strove for a home characterised by the German word *Gemütlichkeit*, which can be translated as snugness or cosiness. But the snugness which so appealed to Queen Victoria was less inviting to her Ministers who came over to Osborne for Privy Council meetings. Charles Greville, Clerk to the Council, left a very different impression of the house which he thought 'a miserable place and such a vile house that the Lords of the Council had no place to remain in but the entrance hall, before the Council'. The house had only sixteen bed and dressing rooms on the first and second floors, and the lack of space identified by the Queen was clearly a major problem.

By the end of 1844 the London building contractor Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855) had been approached, firstly to build a new wing and then demolish the old house and add further wings. Cubitt developed not only streets, but entire suburbs in Bloomsbury, Belgravia and Pimlico. Prince Albert must have been familiar with Cubitt's houses, one of which, in Eaton Place, was occupied by George Anson, the Prince's Private Secretary, and close friend. Prince Albert, in coming to Cubitt, was probably attempting to avoid the bureaucracy and delays associated with the architects in the Office of Works. It

RIGHT Osborne House under construction, August 1847 by W L Leitch. The Pavilion and Household Wings are complete but the Main Wing has not yet been built on the site of old Osborne House. The terraces are also under construction







ABOVE Watercolour by W L Leitch showing Osborne in 1850 before the Durbar wing was added. Statues of the boar and dog can just be seen either side of the Household entrance

BELOW Engraving in the Audience Room of Thomas Cubitt, builder of Osborne, from a painting by Henry William Pickersgill (1782-1875)



also enabled him to discuss plans and details of the building with Cubitt at every stage. Prince Albert was criticised for not appointing an architect, but his faith in Cubitt turned out to be well-founded. Cubitt's accurate estimates and careful accounting were an example to other firms.

The Italianate style was initially adopted in England by the architect Charles Barry in the 1830s and Cubitt incorporated the simple classical lines of this style in his London terraces. The essentially two-dimensional street architecture was reworked by Cubitt into a free-standing composition at Osborne more suited to a country house surrounded by its estate. The choice of style may have also been influenced by the site and climate. The view across the Solent reminded Prince Albert of the Bay of Naples. During the hot summer of 1852 (after the new house was finished) the Queen described the 'calm deep blue sea, the balmy air, *all* quite Italian'. The popularity in England of Italianate villas in the mid-nineteenth century is partly attributable to Osborne's influence.

Cubitt provided the drawings and supervised the work. Much of the joinery and cast iron was manufactured in Cubitt's London workshops. Bricks were made on the estate, and the whole building was covered in Roman cement, imitating Bath stone. Cement rendering was a favoured material earlier in the century, but by the 1840s the architectural profession was turning its back on what was then considered to be a 'dishonest' method of building. Nevertheless, it appealed to Prince Albert's sense of economy, for the entire cost was met out of their own private income. Cubitt's concern

for fire prevention led him to construct floors of brick arches spanned between iron girders, with cockleshells for insulation, while inside the rooms all the skirtings were made of cement.

Cubitt's workmen did not undertake any 'gilding or fancy painting' and he often left rooms with green 'builders' finish' on the walls—a distemper which could be washed off when his clients had made their final choice of elaborate decoration. The brightly coloured Renaissance-inspired interiors post-date Cubitt's work and took over ten years to complete. Much of it was devised by Prince Albert in conjunction with Ludwig Gruner (see page 3).

The Pavilion was completed in September 1846 when the royal family moved in. The event was described by Lady Lyttelton, Superintendent of the Royal Children: 'Nobody caught cold or smelt paint, and it was a most amusing event the coming here. Everything in the house is quite new, and the dining-room looked very handsome. The windows, lighted by the brilliant lamps in the room, must have been seen far out at sea. After dinner we rose to drink the Queen's and Prince's health as a *house-warming*, and after it the Prince said very naturally and simply, but seriously, "We have a hymn" (he called it a psalm) "in Germany for such occasions. It begins"—and then he quoted two lines in German which I could not quote right, meaning a prayer to "bless our going out and coming in." It was dry and quaint, being Luther's; but we all perceived that he was feeling it. And truly entering a new house, a new palace, is a solemn thing to do.'

The old Osborne House was demolished in 1848 and the Household and Main wings were fully occupied by 1851.

The next major addition to Osborne was the Durbar Wing in 1890-91. A ground-floor guest bedroom in the Pavilion was turned into part of the corridor linking the new wing which was constructed by Cubitt and Son, the original contractors. The external style deliberately echoes the earlier building but the Indian style interior of the Durbar room is completely unexpected. The first floor housed Princess Beatrice and her family of four children.

Queen Victoria continued to stay at Osborne until her death in 1901. The subsequent history of the house is one of changing use. Edward VII gave the house and the estate to the nation in 1902. The Main and Household wings were converted into a convalescent home for officers. The

Pavilion ground floor, terrace, and Swiss Cottage area were opened to the public but the private suite of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on the first floor was secured by gates and the public not admitted until 1954.

The Estate

The nineteenth-century estate eventually totalled over 2,000 acres and included numerous cottages and lodges for estate workers and members of the Household.

Prince Albert was concerned with every aspect of the development of the house and its estate, where he had a free hand away from the Office of Woods and Works. In his own words in February 1847 he was 'partly forester, partly builder, partly farmer and partly gardener'. The Prince Consort was so devoted to working on the estate that the Queen remarked in her journal on several occasions that he spent too much time planting and pruning. The Prince wrote of his enthusiasm in the winter of 1859 to Vicky, now married to Prince Frederick William of Prussia: 'We have had a fall of nine inches of snow, which looked wonderfully beautiful. I have all but broken my arms against the trees and shrubs, in clearing them, with poles, of the snow, which would otherwise have wholly crushed the fine evergreens and threaten to make havoc of the cypresses especially.'

His planting scheme was partially dictated by the already well-established late-eighteenth-century landscape which surrounded old Osborne House. Other influences include his liking for poplars found at his family home of the Rosenau, and for the Italian fashion which he had seen at first hand of lining principal drives and walks with evergreens, such as myrtle and laurel. The Prince directed the landscaping by semaphore from the Pavilion flag tower. He strengthened the pre-existing shelter belt of broadleaved woodland in the outer park along the coast where traditional English trees—oak, elm and beech—predominated. The Prince continued to leave a clear view of the Solent which was centred on the Main wing, the site of the old Osborne House. Informal clumps of mixed woodland were planted closer to the house and along the road on the west boundary of the estate.

The walled kitchen-garden and adjoining pleasure grounds in front of the house remained as elements from the late-eighteenth-century landscape. Albert improved the pleasure grounds by planting

magnolias, rhododendrons and azalias around the summerhouse (page 24).

The parterres on the terrace, which were interspersed with statuary, were framed by formal walkways of coloured imitation lava. A rich variety of bedding plants was used and Queen Victoria writes in her journal of geraniums and heliotropes and the summer evening air scented with orange blossom, roses and jasmine.

The Prince also laid out the drives and paths throughout the estate. He desired and achieved privacy and seclusion by forming bends in the principal drives which hide the house. A circular carriage ride ran near the perimeter of the estate around which the Queen and Prince Consort often rode in a post-chaise. Char-à-bancs were used when the whole family or visitors were given a tour of the park. An important visit or special anniversary might be commemorated by planting a memorial tree, of which at least 270 existed throughout the state.

The home farm at **Barton Manor** (now in private ownership) supplied Osborne with daily produce. Prince Albert took a keen interest in its efficient running. He made use of the latest technology to harness farm machinery to a steam engine. The Prince and Andrew Toward, his estate Steward, oversaw an extensive drainage programme to improve much of the pasture by inserting drainage tiles made on the estate, and he also experimented successfully with the construction of a gravity tank to convert sewage into farm manure.

The accumulation of land during the lifetime of Queen Victoria contrasts with a gradual disposal of land and buildings on the estate's perimeter in the twentieth century. The most significant alteration to the estate was the establishment of the **Royal Naval College** at Osborne in 1903. The 1859 stable block near the Prince of Wales Lodge was converted to accommodate the College. This supplemented the Naval College at Dartmouth and among the cadets at Osborne were Louis, later Earl Mountbatten, and two future kings: Prince Edward (later Edward VIII) and his brother Albert (later George VI). The college made a significant contribution to strengthening the Royal Navy prior to the First World War, but by 1921 Dartmouth was able to supply all the new cadets required and Osborne College was disbanded. The site of the cadet's dormitories coincides with what is now the visitor's car park, and a small display on the history of the College can be found in the visitors' Reception Centre.



ABOVE A gardener in the pleasure grounds about 1873. He is standing in front of a *Magnolia Grandiflora* planted by Prince Albert on 10 March 1846. The kitchen-garden wall and resited entrance porch of old Osborne House are in the background

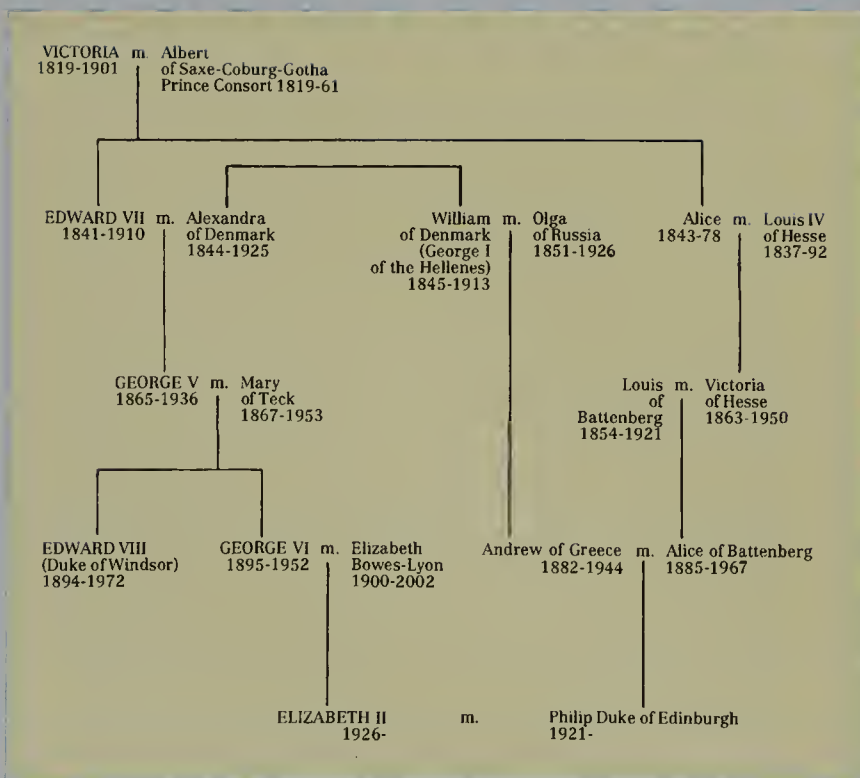


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ABOVE Portrait of Queen Victoria and her family by F X Winterhalter, 1847. A copy hangs in the Dining Room

LEFT Family tree from Queen Victoria to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Both the Queen and Prince Philip are descendants of Queen Victoria

RIGHT Prince Arthur aged seven in Guards' uniform. Named after the Duke of Wellington whose birthday he shared, he also adopted an army career and rose to the rank of Field Marshall



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Family Life

Osborne was a refuge from the strain of London life. The Royal family took delight in returning to their seaside home and each year they spent as much time as possible here and at Balmoral. Queen Victoria spent a record total of 123 days at Osborne in 1848, when building and planting activity was at its height. Even when the main house was completed in the 1850s they spent between 60 and 90 days here each year. The Royal family, accompanied by the Court, established a regular pattern of visits by 1850 which generally included four main periods at Osborne: in March, May, part of July and August, and late November and December, leaving for Windsor just before Christmas.

Hot summer days and Queen Victoria's liking for fresh air encouraged a routine which included breakfasting outside as frequently as possible (a habit begun with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, while a child at Kensington Palace). The Queen's references in her journal to reading and writing under the trees or in a small tent, taking tea in the summerhouse or at the Swiss Cottage, and Albert planting or visiting Barton Farm, conceal the constant stream of dispatch-boxes and papers which received their daily attention. Both the Queen and the Prince enjoyed walking and riding and it was rare for them to remain indoors all day – the couple went out with Mackintoshes and umbrellas even in the exceptionally wet October of 1850.

LEFT Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort on the terrace at Osborne, 1859

ABOVE Royal family near the Orangery, Osborne, on 26 May 1857. This photograph by Caldesi shows (left to right): Prince Alfred ('Affie') aged 12, the Prince Consort (37), Princess Helena ('Lenchen') (11), Prince Arthur (7), Princess Alice (14), Princess Beatrice ('Baby') (6 weeks), Queen Victoria (38), the Princess Royal ('Vicky') (16), Princess Louise (9), Prince Leopold (4) and the Prince of Wales ('Bertie') (15). The bronze-coated zinc statue by Geiss depicts Urania, Muse of Astronomy

RIGHT The Prince of Wales (RIGHT), his tutor Frederick Gibbs, and Prince Alfred, 1854



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ABOVE A watercolour by Queen Victoria of her six eldest children in the grounds overlooking Osborne Bay, June 1850. Left to Right: Louise (aged 2), Helena (4), Alice (7), the Prince of Wales (8), the Princess Royal (9), and Alfred (5).

RIGHT The royal children enacting a tableau representing the Seasons in February 1854, with (LEFT TO RIGHT) Princess Alice as Spring, Princess Royal and Prince Arthur as Summer, Princess Helena as a Spirit Empress, Prince Alfred as Autumn, Princess Louise and Prince of Wales as Winter



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The Queen would often hear the children recite French during the day, or help them with some other lesson, and most evenings the children would visit her in the sitting room in rotation, starting with the youngest. Prince Albert delighted in being with his children and the Queen's journal frequently refers to him showing them how to catch butterflies in a net, flying kites or demonstrating somersaults in the hay. Winter attractions included skating on a pond near Barton Farm, or helping the children make snowmen. The children, in turn, often acted tableaux or charades before their parents which involved elaborate dressing up.

Watercolours of Queen Victoria's birthday table in The Horn Room by J Nash, in 1848 (BELOW) and 1849 (BOTTOM)



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Family Birthdays

A measure of Queen Victoria's delight in Osborne is demonstrated by the fact that, from 1848 until the death of the Prince Consort, she was always there for her birthday on 24 May. The day normally started at 7am with a band playing on the terrace below her bedroom window. Very often the tune was one of Prince Albert's hymns. After dressing in a new summer frock and giving Prince Albert one or two presents from herself, the Queen was greeted at the foot of the stairs by all her children carrying nosegays. Just as in her childhood, a birthday table was set out in a room elaborately decorated with flowers. For many years Queen Victoria commissioned artists such as James Roberts to paint watercolours of the room showing her table full of gifts. Birthday tables were arranged in the Horn room in 1848 and 1849 and in the undecorated Council Room in 1850.

Thereafter a spare bedroom on the first floor of the Main wing became firmly established as the 'Present Room'. Breakfast followed in the Dining Room, sometimes with the band continuing to play on the terrace. Other special events followed, such as the 'surprise' discovery of a miniature fort at Swiss Cottage, and the day often concluded after dinner with dancing in the Council Room.

The Prince Consort was almost invariably at Osborne for his birthday on 26 August. As well as a table in the Present Room, his keen interest in the children's education normally prompted them to give a short French recitation (composed by the French governess) in the Schoolroom on the first floor of the Pavilion. In 1851 the children sang outside the Prince's Dressing Room before escorting him to the Present Room. There followed a French play, acted by the five eldest children in the Council Room. As a special treat that evening the six children came down at dinner time, the four eldest (aged between seven and ten) sat at table for the first time. A 'rustic fete' was always given to the estate workers in honour of Prince Albert's birthday which included a band, dinner in a tent, and an assortment of games such as sack races, tossing the caber, climbing a greasy pole for a leg of mutton, bobbing for oranges in water and a similar game which involved trying to find coins in a barrel of meal. This tradition continued after the Prince Consort's death.

Most of the children spent at least one birthday at Osborne. Their day normally commenced in the Schoolroom where they waited to be given nosegays and escorted by their parents to the Dining Room to find their presents arranged on a table. The Queen records the presents given to Princess Alice in 1848 for her fifth birthday, which included jewellery and a most unusual gift from the Corporation of Newport, Isle of Wight, 'a live little lamb all decked out with ribbons . . . We had it tamed for her by Toward's daughter. It is a sweet, gentle little thing and enchanted Alice and all the children'. The next month the animal painter Thomas Sidney Cooper (1803-1902) painted Milly the lamb at Barton Farm and gave the painting as his own present to the Princess.

Prince Helena's third birthday concluded with the whole family dancing in the Drawing Room, accompanied by the Duchess of Kent on the piano. On another occasions Prince Albert released balloons on the lawn, or gave magic lantern shows to the children in the evening.



LEFT 'Osborne, 1865' also called 'Sorrow', by Sir Edwin Landseer is displayed in the Horn Room

The Later Years

Family life was irreversibly altered in 1861, a devastating year for Queen Victoria. It started in March with the death of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and culminated in the increasing illness and finally the death from typhoid of the Prince Consort on 14 December. The widowed Queen was overwhelmed with grief and immediately retreated to Osborne, supported by Princess Alice, where she remained until early March 1862. Her actions thereafter were influenced by her desire to do what Albert would have wished. Her annual routine changed, however, and the Queen appears to have avoided the associations of earlier anniversaries. She generally returned to Osborne in mid-December after visiting the Prince Consort's mausoleum at Frogmore, Windsor. Her stay at Osborne now included Christmas, but never her birthday on 24 May which was almost invariably spent at Balmoral, as was the Prince Consort's birthday in August. Conversely their wedding anniversary, which was formerly celebrated at Buckingham Palace or Windsor was subsequently observed at Osborne almost every year for the rest of her life.

In later years Osborne inevitably lost much of the joy the young family had brought with them. Nevertheless Queen Victoria received frequent visits from her grand-

children, and children became residents once more after Princess Beatrice married Prince Henry of Battenberg at Whippingham Church in 1885. Princess Beatrice was the Queen's constant companion and she remained in the Durbar wing after the early death in 1896 of Prince Henry from malaria caught during the Ashanti campaign.

A vivid picture of life at Osborne is given by members of the Court. Periods in waiting were generally for one month in every three. Henry (later Sir Henry) Ponsonby was appointed Equerry to Prince Albert in 1856 and was regularly in waiting. He became Private Secretary to Queen Victoria in 1870, and thereafter he moved with the Court on its annual progress between Osborne, Windsor, Buckingham Palace and Balmoral until his death in 1895. When at Osborne he



LEFT Queen Victoria at Frogmore working outside with one of her Indian servants in attendance. Queen Victoria used a similar tent at Osborne



Queen Victoria working on her dispatch-boxes at Osborne with some of her family, 1898. LEFT TO RIGHT Prince Leopold of Battenberg, Princess Aribert of Anhalt, Duchess of York with Prince Edward and Princess Mary (on knee), Princess Margaret of Connaught, Prince Alexander of Battenberg (on ground), Duke of York with Prince Albert, Queen Victoria, Prince Arthur of Connaught, Duchess of Connaught, Princess Patricia of Connaught (on ground), Princess Henry of Battenberg, Princess Ena of Battenberg, Princess Helena Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, Prince Maurice of Battenberg

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lived with his family in estate cottages on York Avenue. His diaries do not do justice to the constant demands required of him as Private Secretary. Instead, they are scattered with references to skating and playing ice hockey at Barton in the winter, and croquet in summer. The perception of Arthur, one of his sons, is rather different: 'from my birth until his death my father seemed always to be writing and never have any holidays'.

Frederick Ponsonby, Sir Henry's second son, was appointed Equerry to Queen Victoria in 1894. He described a typical day which began with the whole Household coming down to breakfast, before commencing work. The Queen went out at noon to ride in her pony chair. The members of the Household were also free to go their separate ways for a walk in the grounds. The Household lunched separately from the Queen in their own dining room in the Household Wing at 2pm, the Master of the Household and the Equerry carving at opposite ends of the table. At 3pm the Queen went driving in a carriage and pair, with an outrider in front and the Household were again free to go out themselves. Ladies-in-waiting had tea together at 5pm, but the gentlemen took tea in their own rooms. Thereafter, there was little to be done until dinner at 8pm or later, for which the gentlemen wore formal dress of knee breeches and stockings.

Court etiquette had to be observed even out of doors. The Household were not to be seen by the Queen when she went riding in the grounds and some courtiers had stories to tell of seeing the Queen's outrider approaching on horseback, and being forced to dive for cover behind the bushes.

The Queen was renowned for her imperviousness to the cold, and her observation for 29 December 1890 is atypical: 'A bitterly cold night and we cannot keep some of the rooms warm.' The following day she wrote 'Dreadfully cold. 11 degrees of frost and 4 (degrees) all day. We had to sheet up windows and draw curtains in the rooms to make it at all bearable to sit in. Dark and gloomy all day.' Cubitt's heating system provided background heat, but it also relied on fires in individual rooms.

Comments on the cold were more common from the Household. Marie Mallet, a Lady-in-waiting, wrote the following month: 'The House is fairly warm, but the Drawing Room so 'Siberian' and I came to bed chilled to the bone.' When the Queen had a fire lit, beech logs were burnt. She had a distinct dislike of coal fires, but in winter members of the Household were known to light them in her absence. Arthur Ponsonby related an instance where the Queen's return caught them unawares. 'We had a warning that she was coming and pails of water were brought in, and the fires put bodily into them and then all the windows opened to take away the smell.'

Some evenings were enlivened by lectures or recitals given by visiting musicians. The early practice of the Household performing *tableaux vivants* over the New Year was revived some time after the death of the Prince Consort. There were normally several scenes, each representing a letter or a word, followed by a final scene depicting the entire word. Two words in 1868 were 'homely' and 'finch', and in 1893 'New Year' was enacted. The tableaux often reproduced paintings. One tableau in 1891

was *La Rixe* (The Brawl) after the painting by E Meissonier which had been given to the Prince Consort in 1856. The scene was a quarrel in a tavern which Queen Victoria considered 'a truthful representation of the picture'. They were not always so highly acclaimed and a biblical tableau of Naomi and Ruth in 1888 was described by the Queen as 'not quite so successful as it might have been, owing to the ladies getting the giggles and shaking.'

By the 1890s entire plays were commonly performed in the Council room and later the Durbar Room. Princess Beatrice enthusiastically appeared in them all. Queen Victoria took a keen interest in all aspects of their production, carefully reading the script before it was staged, and attending rehearsals at which she 'criticised freely' according to Arthur Ponsonby. He described a production of *She Stoops to Conquer* by Goldsmith which was performed at Osborne in January 1893. 'I played Tony Lumpkin . . . Princess Louise who could act but couldn't learn her part was Miss Hardcastle; Princess Beatrice who couldn't act but could learn her part was Constantina Neville . . . There was one critical moment when Princess Louise got into her part in the wrong act. But there was a clique of footmen who were splendid when any hesitation came.' Ponsonby chose his words carefully, 'clique' referring in the late nineteenth century to a band of hired applauders in a theatre.

The Death of Queen Victoria

Even in the 1890s Queen Victoria occupied Osborne for around 90 to 100 days each year, continuing the daily routine established at Osborne over 50 years. The Queen remained alert in the late 1890s, but her eyesight was failing, and a combination of rheumatism and two bad falls forced her to use a wheelchair. Queen Victoria's health was deteriorating when she returned to Osborne for Christmas in 1900. The Queen suffered a slight stroke on 17 January 1901. She was nursed in her bedroom, surrounded by most of her family, and on 22 January the 81-year-old Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India, died.

The calmness within the Pavilion contrasted with the clamour outside the estate gates where the waiting crowd scrambled to telegraph the news across the world. Most agreed it was the end of an era. Queen Victoria's body lay in state in the

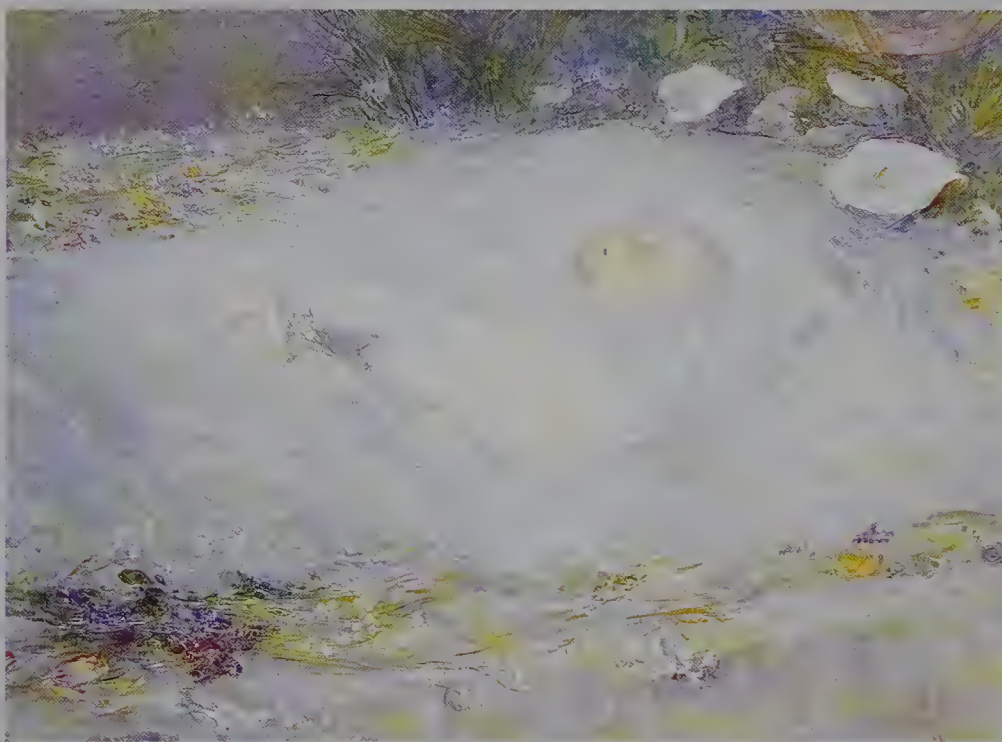


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Dining Room, surrounded by four motionless Grenadier Guards in scarlet tunics. On 1 February the funeral cortège passed through East Cowes where the Royal Yacht *Alberta* carried the Queen across the Solent. The Queen forbade black for her funeral and the streets of London were hung with purple tied with white silk bows. Her coffin, draped with a white and gold pall, was borne to Windsor and laid to rest alongside that of the Prince Consort in the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore.

ABOVE A tableau vivant in the Council Room, January 1888. Princess Beatrice as the Queen of Sheba 'in real Eastern draperies, Indian shawls and jewels' and Sir Henry Ponsonby as Solomon with two of Queen Victoria's Indian servants in attendance

BELOW Death-bed portrait of Queen Victoria, 24 January 1901, by Hubert von Herkomer (1849-1914)



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LEFT Queen Victoria opening the Great Exhibition, 1 May 1851, by Henry Selous (1811-90)

BELOW CENTRE Prince Albert in the uniform of a Colonel of the Rifle Brigade, taken from a portrait by F X Winterhalter, 1859

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Prince Albert

Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg was born on 26 August 1819 at Schloss Rosenau near Coburg (now part of Bavaria). Albert's upbringing was strict, and self-discipline led him to construct a demanding educational timetable overseen by his tutor. Albert and his brother Ernest (born 1818) spent their childhood summers at the Rosenau where they found time to build a miniature fort in the grounds and cultivate a small garden near the Schweitzerei, or Swiss dairy farm. Their enthusiasm for collecting developed into a private museum which was later given to the town of Coburg. Ernest was groomed to become Duke Ernest II of Saxe-Coburg and he succeeded his father in 1844. It was hoped that Albert would marry his cousin Princess Victoria and the couple first met in 1836. Albert continued his education in Brussels and Bonn, in 1837-38 and went on an influential tour of Italy which helped to develop his love of Italian art and architecture.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were married in 1840. Prince Albert's upbringing profoundly influenced his attitudes to his own children's education and Osborne is an ideal place in which to understand something of his role as a father because it was here that he re-created many of his childhood activities.

The Prince was never totally accepted in British Society, but his many interests and his desire for efficiency and reform, and his deep commitment to any cause he espoused have left a remarkable and lasting legacy. He established the running of the Royal Household on modern lines and also encouraged the reorganisation of the army. The Prince gradually assumed an involvement in constitutional affairs. He was a thorough and efficient Private and Personal secretary to the Queen, drafting memoranda and assisting in negotiations, particularly with foreign Heads of State. The Prince's influence in educational reform was recognised by his election as Chancellor of Cambridge University in 1847, and he contributed to the expansion of University Colleges in Ireland. His scientific interests included the Presidency of the British Association. He was also President of the Royal Agricultural Society of England and he introduced many modern farming practices to his farms.



Prince Albert's taste in art and architecture can be seen at Osborne. He initiated a scholarly study of Raphael (1483-1520) and established a detailed catalogue of the paintings in the Royal Collection. Prince Albert oversaw the rebuilding of Whippingham Church, Isle of Wight, designed by himself and the architect A J Humbert, and the construction of Balmoral Castle, the enlargement of Buckingham Palace and the redecoration of parts of Windsor Castle. He also chaired the Royal Fine Arts Commission in selecting works of art for the new Palace of Westminster. Arguably, Prince Albert is best remembered for his interest in the collaboration of art and technology. Under his Presidency, the Royal Society of Arts staged the Great Exhibition of Arts and Manufacturers in 1851. Objects from all over the world were exhibited in the glass and iron Crystal Palace in Hyde Park. The Great Exhibition was an unprecedented success and the financial surplus funded the construction of the South Kensington complex of Museums and Imperial College.

As well as his other interests, Prince Albert engaged in a demanding schedule of launching ships, opening bridges and institutions, and unveiling statues throughout the nation. His commitment and enthusiasm were seemingly endless, but he was unable to meet the physical demands imposed upon him and overwork aggravated his last and fatal illness of typhoid in December 1861.

Prince Albert was buried in 1862 in a mausoleum at Frogmore, near Windsor, designed by Gruner and A J Humbert, but inspired by the one he and Ernest had built for their father at Coburg. The Queen never ceased to grieve for the Prince Consort. His influence governed much of her later life. She wrote in December 1861: '... his wishes—his plans—about everything, *his* views about *every* thing are to be my *law*! And no human power will make me swerve from what *he* decided and wished.'

During the 1860s and beyond, Prince Albert was commemorated by innumerable statues and institutions which remain today, including the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens and the adjacent Royal Albert Hall, close to the site of the triumphant Great Exhibition of 1851.



Join English Heritage

English Heritage looks after a number of properties in the Isle of Wight.

Carisbrooke Castle is where Charles I was imprisoned prior to his execution in London in 1649. Norman in origin, the castle is the official residence of the Lords and Governors of the island. The thirteenth-century Great Hall now houses the island's county museum. **Yarmouth Castle** was one of a chain of Tudor coastal forts built by Henry VIII against the maritime supremacy of Spain and the threat of invasion following his break with the Papacy. **Appuldurcombe House** is a restored eighteenth-century mansion standing in a fine park landscaped by Capability Brown. **St Catherine's Oratory** is the surviving tower of a fourteenth-century chapel, which became a light beacon to aid mariners.

Full details of over 400 historic buildings and monuments looked after by English Heritage are given in the *English Heritage Members' and Visitors' Handbook*, which is on sale at monuments and is issued free to members. You can help English Heritage to improve enjoyment and understanding of its properties by becoming a member. You will gain free admission to all sites and receive a regular magazine. Details are available at any staffed property or by post from English Heritage, PO Box 570, Swindon SN2 2YR.



QUEEN VICTORIA loved 'dear beautiful Osborne'. She purchased the estate in 1845 as a country residence where she and Prince Albert could enjoy private family life away from the affairs of state.

The present house was built under the personal direction of Prince Albert. The architecture was much influenced by the Prince's love of Italy. He said that the view across the Solent reminded him of the Bay of Naples. It was in such a delightful setting that the Queen and her family were to spend some of their happiest days.

In this richly illustrated souvenir, Dr Michael Turner, of English Heritage, guides the visitor through the splendid Royal Apartments and Nursery Suite, and describes the latest restoration work undertaken by English Heritage.

FRONT COVER: The chimney-piece and peacock overmantel in the Durbar Room

BACK COVER: The newly restored Dining Room



ENGLISH HERITAGE

KN-587-665

ISBN 1-85074-922-1



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